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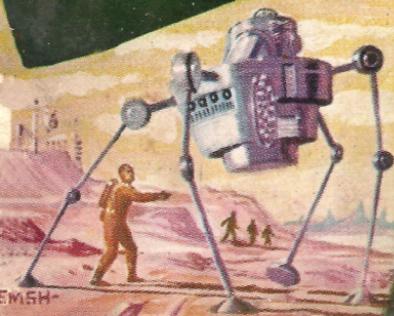
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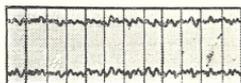


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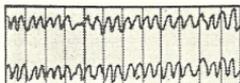
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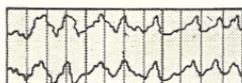
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STORIES

Volume 9

JANUARY, 1959

Number 5

SERIAL NOVEL

- CADUCEUS WILD (1st of 4 Parts)
..... *Ward Moore & Robert Bradford* 6
- They were rebels against a tyranny that only a small minority considered oppressive at all — the Medarchy, where every citizen was a patient, and the doctor's word was law. And if they were captured — they'd be "cured" rather than executed. But to Cyrus Tarn and Virginia Carling, this was worse than execution!

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The perfect defense against war turned out to be the most dangerous of weapons against its makers...
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THOSE STRANGE INNER URGES

You have heard the phrase; "Laugh, clown, laugh." Well, that fits me perfectly. I'd fret, worry and try to reason my way out of difficulties—all to no avail; then I'd have a hunch, a something within that would tell me to do a certain thing. I'd laugh it off with a shrug. I knew too much, I thought, to heed these impressions. Well, it's different now—I've learned to use this inner power and I no longer make the mistakes I did, because I do the right thing at the right time.

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CADUCEUS

WILD

by Ward Moore
& Robert Bradford

illustrated by FINLAY

It was a tyranny that only a minority considered oppressive at all — the medarchy, the sane and healthful society where the doctor's prescription was law, and everyone had to carry a medical chart with him at all times. How could the underground of the maladjusted—the mallies—hope to overturn such a system, when so few could see that cradle-to-grave regulation of a person's life, in the name of "health" robbed him of all human dignity? And now, Cyrus Tarn, Virginia Carling, and her ten-year-old brother, were fugitives from the medarchy, depending upon the underground to get them out of the country. For if they were caught, they wouldn't be executed—they'd be cured, robbed of their memories and individualities (after revealing all they knew) and would spend the rest of their lives in forgetful contentment...

*Send for the doctor, send for the
nurse;
Send for the man with the alligator
purse.*
—children's skip-rope rhyme

acteristics that one would remember long. He was neither tall nor short, and had short gray hair. His face had some lines of middle age—but not many—a rather large nose, and lips which might have been full

THE MAN, inconspicuously and not too well dressed, had few char-



"We had a rough moment when we were stopped by one of those arrogant nurses."

if they were not kept habitually pressed together. He barely finished getting the suitcase from the steps onto the station platform (the boy had made the jump impatiently, releasing a fraction of the energy repressed during the long ride) when the locomotive strained impatiently at the mixed train. The engine, like all the rolling stock on this deliberate anachronism of a railroad—built generations after the age of railroad construction—was a museum piece. It was just barely adequate to the job of hauling the combination baggage and passenger coach, three freight cars and a caboose, up the hard grades. They jerked past the man as he stood there, momentarily indecisive, his guard down and his resolution slack.

"I don't see Vicky," complained the boy. "You said Vicky would be here."

"Not at the train, Hank. We've still a little way to go. And be careful about names—especially hers."

"Aw, there's nobody around to hear."

The man patted his compan-

ion's shoulder affectionately; the boy was irritable after the confining journey. At the same time his fingers conveyed a message, calling attention to the minute building with the sign, *SECARROS, ELEV. 1563; S. F. 217*. The boy looked up questioningly, and then back. A woman strolled out and came slowly but determinedly toward them.

Been watching us, the man thought, sizing us up. Naturally. Not caduceus, but the ophthalmoscope ought to be the ubiquitous symbol of the medarchy. Sees all, knows everything, peers into your insides. Big Brother, MD.

For the hundredth time, he blessed Victoria's inspiration in picking this spot as hideout and rendezvous, in spite of Alex's opposition and his own, and Stuart Yester's doubts. Inaccessible except by train or plane, Secarros was the playground established by the heads of the great pharmaceutical houses—the Medarchy's 60 Families—where well-known or socially-aspiring specialists had weekend cabins or more elaborate summer homes.

All roads ended abruptly at some doctor's gate or continued grudgingly to his private airport, the hunting lodge used by his guests, or his servants' quarters. The thirty-five mile highway with which they connected supported only cars and trucks freighted here on the railroad; it joined no other thoroughfare.

THERE WAS no law or medical regulation which said you couldn't come to Secaros if you chose, but no one ever used the passenger section of the thrice-weekly train except the meanest employees—that is to say, those clearly beneath suspicion. Only a very stupid or a very clever mallie would expose himself to the obvious dangers. As Vicky had pointed out, just before John Rald had said in his own odd way...

"Your charts."

The elderly woman evidently combined the functions of stationmaster, district nurse, and Medical Police; the man hardly needed the confirmation of the black caduceus pinned next to the red-white-and-blue one. He handed her the thick sheaf

loosely bound in transparent plastic, and the thin one in the pliofilm envelope.

She glanced at the first page of his chart. "Who are you going to work for, Cyrus Tarn?"

No "mister", just as there had been no "please" attached to the initial curt demand. He thought wryly of the elaborate politeness of the orderlies in the cities, and the exquisite, ominous courtesy of the subcuties. This woman's roughness was infinitely preferable because it didn't suggest limitless resources of coercion.

"No one, Lieutenant," he answered deferentially. "We're just on a visit to my brother. He's a gardener at Dr. Ford's."

There was an undergardener named Phil Tarn at Ford's; the man had learned Phil's history by heart. Electro-tranquilization—the modern substitute for lobotomy—memory very defective, probably couldn't recall whether he had a brother named Cyrus or not. Never a mallie in the political sense, or suspected of not being a Patient, Phil Tarn's confinement and treatment had been for ordinary maladjust-

ment—attempted murder, to be exact. And no known connection with an old friend of a friend in the mallie underground. Nor could the MP check immediately on his story; Dr. Ford had no phone.

THE MP grunted. There was a hint of asthmatic wheeze which would have kept her off duty almost anywhere else—until the symptom was at least suppressed. “In here then, if you’re not going to be on a staff where there’s a regular check. I’ll have to bring your charts up to date myself.”

And she resents the extra annoyance, thought Cyrus, pleased. Means she’ll be in a hurry to get through. Unless I antagonize her into doing something spiteful. “Sorry to cause you the trouble, Lieutenant,” he apologized.

She grunted again as she led the way to the stationmaster’s office. There was no sign of the antiseptic atmosphere characteristic of examination cubicles; this, too, gave Cyrus comfort. The woman took thermometers out of a glass tumbler of alcohol; he had his lips

and teeth obediently parted as she stuck one under his tongue. Despite his experience, the boy was slower; she had to say brusquely, “Open your mouth,” before she could do the same for him.

Her fingers were unpleasantly pulpy on his wrist. Cyrus hoped that the danger she represented, comparatively remote though it was, wasn’t making his pulse race. Consciously he breathed steadily, evenly. His eyes moved over her desk to the aging posters on the wall above: *Wanted For Treatment*. No one there he knew. Down to the inkpad and forms. These were the least of his worries; his own prints were on the chart of Cyrus Tarn.

SHE REMOVED the thermometer. “The boy, Henry Goodspeed. Not your son?”

“Grandson,” supplied Cyrus, watching him out of the corner of his eye. How long did it take a child to get used to the ways of guilt? And Hank was particularly vulnerable after the school raid, detention, hospitalization, and kidnapping—to say nothing of the secrets he

had been barely saved from revealing.

"Fifty's young for a grandson of ten." She took the thermometer from Hank, read it, shook it down, popped it back into the alcohol. Was she suspicious? Or had the remark been faintly sociable?

"My daughter's boy," Cyrus explained, simulating prideful garrulity. "Norah was a nurse like you, Lieutenant, though not in the Medical Police." He hesitated for an instant, wondering if he were daring too much. "Respiratory trouble. Victim of the Mercifuls." The boy was used to these glib histories; he had passed as Cyrus' son, nephew, pupil, cousin.

The MP's pale lips pursed; her breathing became more audible. "Dirty murderers," she snuffled through her teeth. "Dirty psychos. I'd like to give them the old-fashioned shock-treatments. Tranquilizing or euthanasia's too easy on them. They ought to *feel*."

And they'd like nothing better than to stab a lancet—or whatever the currently favored means is now—under your shoulderblades, put you out of

your misery. What a world! What a world, when you and the mercifuls don't realize you're twins.

HER TONE was distinctly less hostile as she finished her notations. "It's a dreary place here," she said. "Unless you're somebody important. And I notice the bigshots are always taking off for somewhere else."

The lonely MP, he reflected. *Next thing she'll be inviting us for tea. I was just a shade too successful in getting chummy.* "We're only staying a couple of days. Three at the most."

"Don't forget to be here half-an-hour before traintime," she warned. "I'll have to go over your charts again before you leave."

"Certainly, Lieutenant."

"If you need attention meanwhile, don't wait until something develops. Remember, we're not as young as we used to be." (*My fatal charm*, he thought. *Why did I lay it on so thick?*) "There's a neuropathic history here." She tapped his chart. "Some people think they can save money by ignoring

symptoms, but their case histories always catch up with them. It's cheaper to pay a fee, or a dozen fees, than to have the Credit Bureau bill you for hospitalization. You got a referral here, of course?"

This was the weak point of his story, though one which would never be exposed in a hundred times. "Of course, Lieutenant. Doctor Caliggs."

She frowned. "Caliggs, Caliggs. Oh. . . yes. Specialist. Not here very often."

"My doctor wasn't sure there were any general practitioners in Secarros. He mentioned Dr. Caliggs was an old personal friend. I hope it's all right."

"Of course it's all right if the doctor said so. Hmmmm. Well, if you can't find him, get in touch with me right away."

"I surely will, Lieutenant. Thank you."

"Thank you, Lieutenant," echoed Hank, as he had been drilled.

"Your brother's not meeting you?"

"No—he couldn't get off. But I know the way. From letters," he added, not knowing how long she'd been in Secar-

ros. "Up the road from here to the highway, then left. Southward for about two miles across the bridge, until we come to the road marked F. Follow that westward to Dr. Ford's driveway." The route—which he had no intention of taking—unfolded maplike in his mind.

"Right," she said, unconcerned. "I'm only here at train-time. If you need me, the phone's 633."

FOR A MOMENT, he feared that she might start walking with them. "Come on, Henry. Let's not take any more of the Lieutenant's time."

He was relieved when she turned her back and began locking up. They stepped out into the sunlight; he picked up the suitcase and they walked swiftly up the gravelled, dusty road.

"She'd call the orderlies, Si, wouldn't she, if she'd been suspicious? I mean, we'd sort of be on our way back to the hospital if those charts hadn't looked OK?"

"Everything's all right, Hank. Maybe it would be better not to talk about it right

now. And call me 'Grandfather' or 'Gramps' for a while—just to keep in the habit."

"Sure, Gramps. Guess I'm kind of rattled—she had me scared. More than the subcutes. She's a sort of orderly, isn't she?"

"Yes, Medical Police. The black pin she was wearing shows that. Subcutes—Surgical - Bactericidal - Custodial Technicians..." he rolled the full title out, thinking how little the derisive nickname mitigated the horror they inspired "...are more dangerous than orderlies because they're smarter. And they don't wear pins or uniforms. Now remember, Henry Goodspeed, you're on your way to see your Uncle Phil, and you never heard of anyone named Victoria Carl- ing."

"Sure, Gramps. I'm not a dope. I just got scared back there."

"I'm always scared," confessed Cyrus. "It's not comfortable, but it keeps you healthy in the Healthfare State—so long as being scared makes you careful, not panicky."

"I'm careful, but I don't know what I could do if a couple of orderlies jumped up and grabbed me."

CYRUS SHOOK his head. "Nor I. I only wish they hadn't got into the fixed habit of using parapentothal to listen in on things we'd rather they didn't know about."

"You can't help yourself, can you? I mean, there's nothing you can take or do to keep from spilling everything when they give you that stuff?"

"Maybe there is, Hank. We haven't got it and don't know about it. Don't worry, though—you're safe now."

They walked for a little way in silence, the boy kicking up loose pebbles or stopping to pick a blade of grass to chew on. *We're badly handicapped, Cyrus thought. A few hundred years ago, all you needed was numbers or muskets. Now you needed knowledge. Lack of it keeps us under their thumbs. More than that, it makes it ever harder to convince Patients that the Ama could ever be wrong about anything.*

It was all, "The Doctor

says", "The Doctor ordered", "The Doctor knows". Mallies weren't merely subversive—they were virtually blasphemous. And the few doctors who were in sympathy with the underground were allies, rather than partners. They'd go so far, and no farther; they condescended to be helpful. If Alex knew the answer to parapentothal, he kept it to himself.

One couldn't even trust the mallies you worked with to overthrow the Ama with medical lore. Hippocratic oath: "...and to none others."

Perhaps a new generation—would the medarchy last so long? Sadly Cyrus admitted the probability—perhaps a new generation would take a different approach, train doctors of their own. If they could. There had been a time when medical schools weeded out social undesirables, including men and women with unprepossessing manners. Now they were interested only in your family and your family's friends. Any history of maladjustment barred you. Permanently. No more baldheaded barbers...

No, the only possible credit

item was consequent overconfidence. Not just at the top. (What did he know about the top? Gossip, rumors, guesses.) On the part of the underlings. Cyrus thought about that MP. She was pretty lax after all. She might easily have kept them hours: bloodpressure, wassermans or urinoanalyses, because there were no recent ones shown on his chart. (There couldn't be—that added danger if checked with the doctor supposed to have given them.)

Unprepared criminals were blundering criminals, and blundering criminals were caught and examined, held for observation and psychiatry, subjected to psychotherapy—p s y c h o - pharmacology or electro-tranquilization (they said that surgery had gone out; lobotomy was too crude for the age; but who *knew*?)—until they were discharged, criminals no longer. Mallies no longer, nonconformists, rebels, individuals no longer.

The strength of the organized mallies (*strength? organized?*) Cyrus smiled wryly; no one knew better the emptiness

of the words) lay in comrades like Victoria and John Rald, who were able to foresee all sorts of contingencies. He himself was prone to make the mistakes of over-elaboration, being forced to rectify them by improvisation.

Suppose she'd taken a notion to look down Hank's throat and seen the tonsils whose presence contradicted the unavoidable notation? What improvisation would have helped then? Gooseflesh gathered at the consciousness of how easily betrayal could have come.

THE WEIGHT of the suitcase made him switch it to the other hand. He had packed the clothes he thought Victoria might want, some things of Hank's, his own toothbrush and razor. The bulk of space and weight was for the several hundred pages of manuscript, begun by her father, and worked on from time to time by Victoria: *A Factual and Critical History of the Doctors' Dictatorship*.

Would it ever be possible to convey the flavor of the med-archy to those who hadn't lived

under it? The very fact that Cyrus didn't fear to carry the unfinished book around with him was symptomatic. Only as an accidental afterthought would a subcute or an MP search the baggage of a fleeing mallee. They didn't look in suitcases, but into minds and bodies.

The healing art—caduceus wild. In the Eighteenth Century, the doctor had been a figure of fun—the barber-chirurgeon with his leeches, cups and basins, salves and catheters and purges. Quack, from quick-silver, mercury, the specific for syphilis; dose them, bleed them, watch them die; then the fad for Jenner's cowpox (the smallpox did for the Sun King in twenty-four hours what the great pox couldn't do in fifty years). Matter of taste; well and good.

BUT THEN came the subtle progress from valet to authority, Figaro to Lord Lister, servant to master. "Science" in upper case, "The Age Of", pulling medicine to its pinnacle. If Science could invent a breechloading rifle to kill a

man a mile away, then Science could save his life. If Science could wipe out whole cities, it established a right to rule those spared. The doctor could perform a caesarian section and rip MacDuff untimely from his mother's womb; didn't this give him authority to prescribe which wombs should bear, and whose seed was unfit for procreation? *Brother Mendel, innocent monk, your cherished generations of peas have borne poisonous fruit.*

But only for the good of mankind, of course—only to make people healthier, happier, longer-lived. If in the process the doctor became an object of veneration (Microbe Hunters, Men in White, The Country Doctor), no harm was done; patients recovered more quickly when they had perfect faith in the physician. So who took fright or even noticed when the kindly, overworked healer became priest and despot?

"Are you really fifty?" asked the boy suddenly. "Or is that just something down on the chart?"

"I'm really fifty," Cyrus confirmed, restraining a pedantic

impulse to add, "When you make a false chart, stick to the truth as much as you can. Never leave an unnecessary lie to trip over." Hank was already too burdened with illicit knowledge.

"Fifty's awful old. Vi—I mean, somebody I know's only twenty-four and she's been grown for years."

Yes, thought Cyrus, Victoria is only twenty-four. I'm too old for her—not merely in the eyes of the Ama, who wouldn't give us a marriage license, if we dared ask for one—but in Hank's eyes, and our friends', who are too considerate to show it. Fifty and twenty-four; perhaps not May and December, certainly not, but spring and autumn.

It was still more obvious three years ago: the old lecher—friend of the family, her father's age—and the child just turned twenty-one. And the humiliation for her to run into a gynaecological right after: "Don't you realize, young woman, you're supposed to report immediately for examination and prophylaxis? Glad to see you've kept up your shots at

least." (The chart was false of course; Victoria had never had such injections.) "Any lapse there could be serious for you. We're not interested in morals except as symptoms of adjustment, but standards of medical care mustn't be jeopardized by false modesty. Next time. . ."

"This where we turn?"

HE LOOKED up with a start; the road they were on came to a perpendicular end at a wider, smoother one. Beyond, a rail fence, as consciously antique as the railroad, enclosed a pine woods. "Right," he said.

"You told her left, back there."

"Well, let's go right, just to be contrary."

Hank glanced at him gravely, then decided it was a joke and smiled politely. They continued to climb. There were woods on their left; on the right, iron pickets of a high fence which had somehow survived the scrap drives of World War III. From behind them, two dogs voiced their detestation of pedestrians. Or mallies?

A "Y" branched off the

road; they followed the westerly arm. The rail fence gave way to a masonry wall—granite boulders a man could climb without too much trouble. The pines in back seemed both taller and farther apart. His pulse quickened at the sight of an arched gate inscribed, *Galentry Private. Visitors Phone From Gate For Admission.*

He walked around the little wooden cupboard housing the phone circumspectly, as though it contained heavy explosives. His information was that no electronic eye or telephoto camera guarded the entrance, but Cyrus was still wary. The information, so hastily gathered, might not be accurate, or improvements might have been made.

Because the key lay, not in static facts, but the fluidity of people. What did he know of Chris Mallup? When Victoria had said "Secarros!" and Alex had said, "Ridiculous!" John Rald murmured, "I know a fellow there. He'll put you up."

What did it mean in terms of their safety; in terms of precautions to be taken at the moment? Mallup worked for the

owner of Galentry; he was privileged. Now go on from there.

WAS MALLUP the sort of man who would mention their coming? Would it fit in with his status? Was Victoria—would Hank and Cyrus be—acknowledged openly, or furtively hidden? If Mallup had mentioned their coming, surreptitious movement would only excite suspicion. And if he hadn't...

Unsure, dissatisfied, Cyrus at last approached the gate and pushed it open. It swung easily, silently. No alarm bells were audible, no watchdogs gave sudden tongue. "Inside. Quickly," he whispered.

He swung the gate back into place, wondering whether it might contain some device for counting the number of times it was opened. In unspoken agreement they slid behind the shrubbery between the driveway and the pines. The silence remained, neither ominous nor promising.

"All right," he muttered. "I think it's safe." He knew every step of the way from here, al-

most every bush and topographical oddity. The ironical part was that he had naturally—whatever that meant—a rather poor memory. Only intense discipline and application had made it possible for him to retain an intricate combination of facts, symbols, numbers or geographic details—often mutually contradictory, since at times they served for an ostensible story as well as an actual guide—in a mind simultaneously burdened with plans, forebodings, calculations.

They followed the roadway without intruding on it, keeping fairly well concealed behind the convenient landscaping, without giving an appearance of undue stealth if by chance they were observed. Cyrus caught glimpses of the big house up ahead as the road twisted; it was bluff, ugly, domineering and costly. A man who would build or buy such a house must be not only arrogant but assured beyond doubt of his self-importance.

AS THE ROAD turned toward a wide portico, he signalled the boy. They struck

across open ground toward a group of structures whose location and architecture indicated they were the service, maintenance and auxiliary outbuildings; the garages, stables, workshop, toolshed, and servants' quarters, of Galentry.

Though he had studied the layout, Cyrus was momentarily uncertain as they threaded their way between a barn and the underpinnings of a large water tank. Then he remembered. He struck off, and down an unexpected path, led the way to a two-storied house which seemed to have no organic connection or relationship with the other buildings.

She was waiting for them, recklessly—or reassuringly—visible, at the foot of an outside stairway. The noon sun caught the loose ends of her hair—the exact color of a cut apple exposed to the air, he had once told her—and turned them pale gold. The knuckles of one hand pressed against that short, exciting upper lip.

“Vicky! Oh, Vicky!”

Cyrus didn't have the heart to hush the boy—he could only motion Victoria to lead them

quickly from the exposed spot. As always, the sight of her was strangely poignant, the reverse of a dream in which the startling unwinds familiarly. For each time he saw her afresh, he realized that her picture, no matter how often he imagined it, had never become fixed. Each time it was new and inviolate, startling. She was so little, so perfect, so young. So desired and known, yet ever desirable and still unknown; the torn half of an amulet, fitting the one he carried. Victoria, incongruously, rightly named: vulnerable and invincible.

EVEN AS she cried at reunion with them, her small head was royally unbent; emotion did not lessen her dominion over herself. And as she turned to ascend the stairs, one arm around her brother's shoulders, her free hand in Cyrus' her limp—gained long ago when her broken ankle had been inexpertly set—was graceful. There was no compromise with affliction; it was conquered, incorporated into the easy flow of her motion. It forced her to move slowly; it

could not make her move awkwardly.

The door at the head of the stairs was open. "Everything all right?" Cyrus asked in a low voice, as soon as they were in the hall beyond. It was a normal question that anyone might ask, so long as no betraying anxiety went into it.

She took her arm from Hank's shoulder and opened one of the doors flanking the hall. "I think so."

The cautious answer was more disquieting than an open expression of doubt. He looked inquiringly at her. She shook her head, warning him not to put a further burden on the boy, letting him know there was no immediate cause for alarm. Then she was hugging Hank, and lifting her face to Cyrus.

He bent to give her a kiss of affection, of reunion. Instead, he found himself forcing her head back, pressing her mouth with unappeasable longing. She smiled breathlessly. "Oh... Oh, my dear..."

HE REALIZED that he still gripped the suitcase. He

put it down, surveyed the room. Upstairs: bad. Was there an inside as well as an outside stairway? If so, possibly good. Other evaluations would have to wait on what Victoria had to say. There was nothing to be learned from the unmatching twin beds, the dreadnaught mission rocker which must have survived generations of more graceful competitors, the low double dresser, its drawer-pulls decimated in honorable encounter, set beneath the window, or the slightly stuffy air—suggesting only rare use—of this typical servants' room which yet had the faint impress of individuality on it.

He walked to the window. Neither the big house nor the way in could be seen from here: not good. The view was that of a kitchen garden, slightly ragged, a hedge, and beyond, two long, stilt-supported roofs protecting rows of chicken cages. The display of opulent elegance which had marked the rest of the estate was absent; evidently the owner of Galentry didn't believe in sharing all its amenities with the staff. Again he looked questioningly at Vic-

toria, who was sitting on one of the beds with Hank.

"Mr. Mallup is very nice," she said, obliquely answering him. "He hasn't seen John Rald for years, but every so often one or another of John's friends drops in to stay a day or two. I'm Carrie Goodspeed—I'm Hank's half-sister. Can you remember to call me 'Carrie', Hank?"

"Sure. It's a lousy name, 'Carrie'. All right, Carrie. Si still my grandfather?"

"Yes dear. And don't say 'lousy'—that isn't what you mean at all. And Hank..."

"Yeh?"

"Hank."

"Yes... Carrie?"

"Naturally you'll be very careful not to say anything..."

"Gee, Carrie, when did I ever?"

"I know, dear. I just wanted you to be particularly careful in front of Mr. Mallup's granddaughter."

"Granddaughter?" asked Cyrus. "John didn't say anything..."

to go to the bathroom? It's the door in the middle, opposite."

"No, I don't. You got something to tell Gramps you don't want me to hear?"

"I want you to go and wash your hands. And get the *backs* of them clean. And use soap. I'll look at the towel afterward."

"Aw, I don't need to."

"Henry!"

"Yeh, Carrie."

He went out rebelliously, leaving the door open. Victoria said quickly, "The granddaughter is about sixteen. She's a Caducean."

"What's that?"

"Church of the Caduceus. Logical. And she's about sixteen—just the age for fanaticism. I think Mallup knows all about John, and just doesn't care. The girl's another story."

"Yes. It's a bad angle. All the worse for being unexpected." Still, he was relieved, now the danger was defined. Church of the Caduceus. Evidently the medarchy still had the vigor to produce new ideas. "Fortunately it won't be long—we're getting out sometime tomorrow."

SHE SHOOK her head at him. "Hank, don't you want

HANK RETURNED, showed the backs of his hands silently to Victoria. She put her arms around him again. "I've been so frightened for both of you."

"Aw," said the boy, "you needn't. You should have seen—uh—Gramps. . ."

"You'd better tell me from the beginning. But keep your voices low. You left for school, then I got a— Then I had to come here. So I really don't know all that happened."

"Well, I got to school, and everything was funny. It's always funny, going to school in different houses all the time, but I don't mean that. It was the right place all right, because Joan Lews and Buddy Wint and Hy Cohen were there, but none of the other kids. And no teachers. After a while we cased the joint. There was cookies and some good jam in the kitchen. . ."

"Oh, Hank, you shouldn't!"

"Well, gee—there was no one around, and if their old cookies were so valuable they should have locked them up. Anyway, Buddy and Hy decided there wasn't going to be any school

that day and went home. I and Joan were just about ready to do the same when the car drove up and these three big men came in. They wanted to know who we were. Joan told, but I didn't say anything. I don't know what they did with Joan. They said for me to get in the car, but I didn't want to, so one of the guys picked me up and carried me. We went to some place with a room with a desk, and another fellow came out and said, 'Well, well, well. And what's *your* name, young man?' I said, 'My name's Captain Kidd and I want to go home.' I was scared, see, but I was trying not to let on or tell my name. Because if they knew, I figured they'd want to know about the mallee TV station. . ."

"Ah," murmured Cyrus. "Ah."

"What?"

"Nothing, dear. You were brave and smart, and we're proud of you. Go on."

"So he says, 'All right, Captain, tell me where you live so I can take you there.' What a dummy!" He fell silent, clearly lost in reminiscence.

"Then what happened?" Victoria prompted.

HANK SHRUGGED. "Oh, then he asked me a lot more questions, and another guy—a doctor I guess, with a white coat—asked me a lot more, and they gave me a piece of paper with ink splattered all over it and wanted to know what I saw, and I said, 'Ink spots. What do you see?' And then they started with more questions and I said I was tired, so the doctor he stuck me with a needle—I kicked him good first, though—and after that I didn't feel tired a bit, but I still didn't answer right. Then one of them says, 'I believe this is the boy, all right,' and the other says, 'I'm sure of it.' So then they were swell to me, gave me ice cream and everything, and took me to the hospital where a real sourpuss nurse put me to bed.

"Then I was scareder than before, but I fell asleep and had bad dreams and when I woke up another nurse came in with breakfast and gave me a pill. I tried to hold it in my mouth but she did something

with my throat—it didn't hurt—and I had to swallow it. I felt kind of dopey, didn't really go to sleep, then the feeling wore off and I was just plain scared again. I lied there thinking and thinking, and I couldn't figure out anything to do. I went to the door but it wouldn't open, and the window was too high up from the ground to jump out of. Then a different nurse came in with some lunch and another pill, but she wasn't smart as old sourpuss so I held the pill under my tongue till she was gone and spit it out. Gee, it was bitter. I felt low, real low I mean. I knew it wouldn't be long till they came and gave me something to make me tell everything, and then I'd spill it all. About the mallie school, and the paper Si gets out, and the TV station..."

THAT WOULD have really puzzled them, Cyrus thought. Until they realized that a boy would call all broadcasting "TV", whether pictures accompanied the sound or not.

"...I was just getting a real sweat up, when the door opens,

and there's Si, in white pants and everything, like one of those guys who empties bed-pans. . . ."

"An orderly."

"Uh-uh. An orderly is a cop. This was one of those guys around the hospital the nurses talk tough to. Anyway, it wasn't—it was Si. He was pushing a wheelchair, too. I caught on right away and got in. We went through those corridors like nobody's business (but I sure thought we'd never get to the end of them) and down one of those things. . . ."

"Ramps," supplied Victoria.

"Yeh. And a nurse stopped us and asked where we were going, and Si answered something, and then we went on till he suddenly turned into an empty room. So he took our clothes that were in the blankets on the chair all along and threw his white pants on the bed and said, 'Armor for the next knight.' Because the pants were stiff like iron, see? It was a joke. And then he had a couple of passes in his hand and we walked real slow out of a side-door into a car."

HAD HE REALLY appeared so cool and skillful to Hank? It had seemed to Cyrus at the time—and perhaps more so in retrospect—that his fears and uncertainties must have shown plainly on his face, that every moment of dreadful suspense, every start and tremor of apprehension must have been visible, and the pounding of his heart heard aloud. Cyrus the rescuer was a prosaic fact, a choice made reluctantly and in spite of reasoned opposition by both Victoria and Stuart Yester, but for what seemed good and sufficient reasons. Cyrus the dashing hero was a reconstruction with only the most tenuous relation to reality.

He looked at the trees beyond the chicken pens. Yesterday—an hour ago—the phantoms of discovery and capture were all around him; now all he had to consider was an old man, a largely unknown quantity to be sure, but one who had sheltered mallies before. And an adolescent girl. A Caducean. Church of the Caduceus. Have to find out about it. An experiment? Certainly noth-

ing that had been widely publicised. Or had it? Was it possible that Boyd Carling's insistence on building a new society in the shell of the old had been too successful? Successful in a way Victoria's father had never thought of? That the mallies were losing contact with what went on within the medarchy?

Or was the Church of the Caduceus just some spontaneous fad? (Have to find out, anyway.) Was the Ama its College of Cardinals? What were its dogmas? With spiritual strength added to the medarchy's material appeals, the healthfare state would be just about invincible.

One of the Ama's early—and now forgotten—difficulties had been with the neurotics who had accepted its benevolence too readily—who had been enamored of medicine as an ultimate end and implemented their worship by annoying doctors beyond normal expectation. Given an outlet, canalized and disciplined, this old liability could be a new asset. Cyrus shook his head.

"...funniest darn train you ever saw. The conductor's

name is Mister Woodley. His bloodpressure..." Hank's narrative was drawing to a close; Victoria had been brought up to date. Cyrus left the window, and she moved to him simultaneously. This time their clinging together had less fierceness, more urgency.

THE URGENCY was not new to them; but it was still there, baffled year after baffled year. Now, or in the next few days, it would finally be quieted one way or another. The old way of life—the apartness, the furtive meetings, the sudden, inescapable separations—was finished. Now they would either get away entirely to be free at last, or else...

...or else electro-tranquilization, and whatever else the medarchy's wisdom might prescribe for their maladjusted states. Urgency and emotion—what happened to the flame when the candle was blown out? Urgency and emotion would be part of an unremembered past, blotted out, destroyed, nonexistent.

And not just Victoria. (*Just Victoria!*) Hank, and the oth-

ers; comrades, friends; ideas and the memory of ideas. Angers, passions, ideals, hopes, determinations, fears. All urgency, all the inner burning, all caring wiped out by an impersonal current carried in an impersonal electrode manipulated by an impersonal technician employed by a benevolent and compassionate society. Because you were part of that society, and if you were diseased the entire body was afflicted.

You understand, don't you? (Smile.) You'll be a new man. (Smile.) You'll look back on this with gratitude. (Smile.) All right, now; take it easy; this isn't going to hurt a bit. Not one bit. All right, tech. Now then, your troubles will soon be over. . . .zzz... Told you it wouldn't hurt, didn't I? My, how you must have been suffering. . . .zzzz... Carrying all that load, thinking everyone was against you. . . .zzzzz... Imagine, such ideas for a man of your age. Tch-tch. . . .zzzzzz . . . Really in your prime, you know—you'll be an asset to society, instead of. . . .zzzzzzz... give him the full dose, tech—that fixation for the girl seems

to have been pretty firmly implanted. . . .zzzzzzzzz... There—that's that.

AND LATER: why did I fight it? Can't remember what I was afraid of, what seemed to make it so vital to resist. The neurosis itself, of course, the asocial affect. Good thing it's all gone—I feel fine—look at my muscle, listen to my heart. Everything's so peaceful, so well-ordered, so *right*.

And perhaps seeing Victoria on the street and some buried part of the mind twitching (but only fleetingly) in nostalgic dead pain; he smiling politely at her, she smiling politely at him; both thinking, *Did I know him, did I know her? Was that someone, or is it a resemblance...*? I can't remember (alcohol is C₂H₅OH; Katmandu is the capital of Nepal; Mozart died in 1791; 13x13 is 169, but still I can't remember). Must have been in . . . the past. Bad. . . sad. . . asocial. . . I was—I was. . . maladjusted. Oh. . . I'm glad I don't remember. I don't want to remember. Doctor, help me, save

me—help me not to want to remember. Give me a shot, give me a pill, give me anything to make me glad I can't remember. And still later: I wonder what that was all about? Some girl I never saw before, but I got sort of upset. (Must have a checkup.) And did you notice? She had a deformed ankle. That's right: deformed! Uh!

He shivered with her warm in his arms.

"They didn't find the station?" she asked.

HE SHOOK his head. "Not the last I heard. I don't know how they found the school, but this I'm reasonably sure of: it was no accident."

"Daddy's idea." It was a statement, not a question.

"I think so. Everything seems to tie up. Because your father started the illegal schools, because he hid rather than give you and Hank up, and because—more than anything else—he eternally hammered at the idea of avoiding all contact with the medarchy so far as possible; they are making far greater effort than

they would to find just any three mallies. And that's why we're going at last: we've outlived our usefulness. We've become more of a drag than a help to the opposition."

"You haven't," she protested.

"We're in it together," he said. "All three of us. The plane— Do you think it's safe to talk here?"

"You can't hear what's going on in this room downstairs," she said. "If you mean microphones and things, I don't know. But if Tree has the place wired, he's already heard so much that a little more won't make much difference."

Cyrus considered this briefly. The strength of the medarchy was also one of its weaknesses: unlike other authoritarian forms, it could offer no spectacular rewards to informers. Its supremacy depended on the acquiescence of the Patients, on acquiescence based on the assumption that the Ama was purely benevolent—that those who opposed it were hurting themselves. They might be betrayed for reasons which would have seemed secondary

or irrelevant in the days before the medarchy; they wouldn't be turned in for the reasons—money, power, public adulation—which would have been primary then.

"TOMORROW night at ten." He could have told her much more: the type of plane, where it came from, the location of the secret field. He could have told her that the only moment of danger would be when the plane landed to pick them up; after that there were no pursuit planes which could fly as high. But he burdened her with no inessential knowledge; that was one of the first things you learned when you began conspiring against the Ama. Secrets could be pried out of you; what you didn't know you couldn't give away. He was sorry he had told her so much; just knowing the time of rendezvous could be dangerous.

"So short a time," she said. "Oh, it's impossible to believe, really. A few hours, then... Free, and safe..."

Nor could he believe it himself; he dared not allow the

luxury of faith to enervate him. What would it be like—dared he modify that to what *will* it be like?—to live openly together? Man and wife, in holy matrimony, let no man put asunder. No license from the Ama, to be gained—but never by them—only at the expense of all dignity. (Father's medical history: Epilepsy? VD? TB? Poliomyelitis? Daltonism? Mother's history: Nymphomania? Hysteria? Age at menopause? Maternal grandfather: Haemophilia? And on and on.) Just a bored statistical query. Widower of this parish and Victoria Carling, spinster of that. Do you, Cyrus (in using an alias, the trick was to identify himself with the first name); do you, Victoria; if anyone knows just cause; with all my worldly goods; I now pronounce you.

Mr. Tennick, I believe, and Mrs. Tennick (Mrs. Tennick—why had he given Norah as the name of his nonexistent daughter? Poor Norah)—how are things in the States? Shocking, shocking. It was never so bad here; we don't take that sort of thing well, you know. Wind

may enter, rain may enter, but the King, and all that...and after the Harley Street Mas-sacres (they weren't really: a few medical chaps got a bit cut up—no fatalities) restored Constitutional forms... No Ama to say, as it had to the Reverend Boyd Carling: "You can't have a pubile daughter in the same house with you." (How did their host...?) Or as they never got the chance to tell Victoria "You can't bring up a brother..." Hank would have a home and a family at long last.

"Free and safe," he repeated firmly. "And in a few years there'll be an end to the Ama, the subcuties, the Medical Police, the whole Healthfare State."

"God willing," she added.

HANK ASKED unbelievingly, "No more shots and vaccinations?"

"Not unless you want them," said Victoria. "They're voluntary in England now."

"Who'd want them if a bunch of old nurses and doctors didn't grab you?"

"Much worse if you'd been a real Patient."

"I'd never be a Patient. I'm going to be a mallie like Dad was, and you and Vicky."

"I don't want you to use that word after tomorrow, Hank," she said.

"What?" he asked, astonished.

"It's a good, creditable term, here and now," she explained, "and it's come to mean those who hate arrogance and absolutism, who are willing to risk everything for freedom—but it was originally a sneer against us. Now that we're going where they've gotten liberty back, it's no help to all the things we believe in to have to explain we're not really maladjusted—that we just refused to adjust to coercion."

Oh Victoria, thought Cyrus tenderly, dear priggish love. Born a man three hundred years earlier, she must certainly have Fontenoyed, "Gentlemen of France, fire first."

"Heavens!" she exclaimed. "I forgot the food."

"Food!" exclaimed Hank. "Boy, could I eat."

"I wouldn't mind too much

myself," said Cyrus. Absently he felt his cheeks; he'd have to be particularly careful about shaving—so many strange eyes to observe him closely. The medarchy forbade all hair below the eyelashes as unsanitary. MPs enforced the use of depilatories on the entire body, but only facial growth was regarded as a symptom of maladjustment. If they got to England, he might grow a beard. Not a bushy beard, just a close-cropped one. "How would you like me in a . . ."

"I think there's somebody listening outside the door," said Hank.

II

HIS MIND raced back over everything that had been said in the last few minutes. Suspicious, not incriminating. Not that this made any difference when you were not dealing with laws, arrests or trials. The suspect were diagnosed, not accused.

"Oh, I'm sure you must be wrong." His sensitized ear caught the forced note in Victoria's voice. "There's no one here who'd listen . . ."

The knock came, precisely timed. "Come in," she called, unstartled, even gaily welcoming. "Come in."

The man who opened the door blinked, and tilted the brim of his flabby felt hat perfunctorily. "Hi, Carrie. Thought I heard voices—wondered if your company had come?"

He was an old man, with leathery, sinewy hands; wide, soft, stubbled jowls. Denim pants hung loose on his thighs, but the brightly-patterned shirt was tight over his heavy shoulders. His little, bright eyes appraised Cyrus and Hank, turned back to Victoria.

"They have, Mr. Mallup, and we were just coming downstairs. This is my brother, Henry, Mr. Mallup—and this is Henry's grandfather, Cyrus Tarn. You'll have to figure out just what relation Cyrus and I are to each other. It's always been too complicated for me."

"That so? Don't pay too much attention, myself. My granddaughter now—she's always interested in first cousins, second cousins, double cousins, and so on. Genetics, you know

—heredity and that stuff. Never did care who was whose father since I got old enough to know it don't make much difference in the end. Tarn, ay? There's a Tarn over at Ford's."

CYRUS SHOOK his head, hoping Mallup's close acquaintanceship didn't include the MP at the station. "No connection so far as I know."

"That so? Well, it's no matter. Like who sleeps with who, I always say, so long as the springs don't squeak."

"Why?" asked Hank.

"Henry, don't bother Mr. Mallup," said Victoria hastily. "We were just coming down—we didn't hear you come up."

"Seldom do," admitted Mallup. "Count the steps when you get to eighty. Used to do a lot of hunting—learned to walk real quiet."

"Did you hunt bears?" asked Hank.

"Bears, bobcats, mountain lions, coyotes, squirrels, rabbits, deer. Speaking of hunting, how about a little lunch for you folks? Got some eggs, not an hour old—eggs more than a day are poison, pure poison—

some fried rabbit from yesterday, all the fresh vegetables you can eat. Grow them myself. Organic soil. No damn chemicals ever touch them."

They moved out into the hall. "You're not a vegetarian like John Rald?" asked Cyrus.

Mallup, starting down the stairs, shook his head over his shoulder. "Old John's a nut. Real ironclad, copper-riveted brass-buttoned nut. John won't eat a chicken because some mean old man chopped off its head. I don't mind that, but I won't eat anything that's fed or grown unnaturally, because it don't taste right. Like Rafe Tree's fancy truck. But there's some of that, too, in the ice-box, if you fancy it. He sends it over and Judy—that's my granddaughter—pecks at it. Anything's good enough for a doctor's good enough for her."

He led the way into a large kitchen; Cyrus noted that it had both an electric stove and woodrange. "It's very kind of you to put us up for a couple of days, Mr. Mallup," he said.

"Stay's long as you want. I'm a sort of hermit myself—stand people only so long, then I have

to go off by myself, where I can't hear voices. But Judy likes company. Judy! Judy—where are you?"

VICTORIA said, "No need to bother her. I can fix something for all of us."

"Not me," said Mallup, going over to the woodrange and poking in the firebox. "I've cooked for myself too long. No reflection on you, Carrie—I don't let Judy trifle with my food, either."

"I'm not offended. I just hope Judy won't mind my rummaging around in her refrigerator."

"Not her's. Rafe Tree's, like everything else here. Help yourself."

"Boy," said Hank; "we eat."

"Grandfather — grandfather... Where are you? Oh! Excuse me."

"Adolescent," Victoria had said, but Judy was a very ripe sixteen. Her blouse was pushed well forward; her hips filled her slacks. She was a large girl with a wide mouth, small nose, direct eyes, like Mallup.

"Judy Larch," introduced

Victoria. "Cyrus Tarn. Henry Goodspeed."

The girl threw her right hand backward against her chest. "Health!" she cried.

Cyrus, a little startled, imitated the gesture, and tried to manage her ringing tones. "Health!"

Her smile had not lost the faint remnant of a child's grin. "You're one of us," she exclaimed happily.

"One of you?"

"A Caducean." The smile became uncertain. "Aren't you?"

HANK BEGAN hitting himself and muttering, "Health! Health!" till Victoria put a restraining hand on his arm.

"I think Tarn was just being polite," suggested Mallup, scooping some coffee beans from a burlap sack and dumping them into a mill fixed to the wall. The smell drifted tantalizingly through the kitchen.

"But I do want to hear about the Church of the Caduceus," said Cyrus, putting somewhat more warmth into the remark than he had intended. "It

sounds. . .” he reached desperately for the word which would be most welcome *“vital.”*

“Oh, yes!” The smile returned. “You must. . .”

“Hey, how about food?” interrupted Mallup. He finished grinding the beans, emptying them lovingly into a soot-furred coffee pot, ancient dribblings long since baked on to glisten with a shiny patina. He dipped water from a pail on top of them. “Finest spring water a n y w h e r e,” he explained. “Have to haul it myself, but it’s worth it—water run through an iron pipe’s not fit to make coffee, soup or whiskey with.”

“I’m sorry,” said Judy stiffly.

“Let me help you,” offered Victoria.

“There’s nothing to help with, thanks. There’s some shrimp salad and cold duck from Dr. Tree’s. I don’t know what Grandfather’s making on his smoky old stove.”

“Never smokes—I keep the pipes and flue clean. Coffee, omelette, sliced tomatoes. Customers holler before I start beating the eggs.”

“Me for the duck and stuff,” spoke up Hank. “I bet old Doc Tree shoots vitamins on sight. No darn wheatgerm muffins for him.”

“You’re right, son,” agreed Mallup. “Food he eat’s got all the natural taste and values taken out. He has to put them back in with fancy sauces and fortified pills.”

JUDY’S BACK was turned to them as she reached into the refrigerator. “I don’t think it’s right to encourage disrespect of doctors. They give up their whole lives watching over us. Sneering at them’s a poor return.”

“I’ll join Hank on the duck if you have enough, Miss Larch,” said Cyrus, hoping to soothe the girl. He tried to catch Hank’s eye with an admonition to be careful.

“Break another egg for me, Mr. Mallup.” Victoria was setting the table as she talked. “Here’s a glass of milk for you, Hank.”

“Raw milk,” said Judy. “Grandfather doesn’t believe in pasteurization.”

“You always drank it,” said

Mallup. "Doesn't seem to have stunted your growth any."

She shrugged her shoulders pettishly. "People should take advantage of all the wonderful things Science can do for us. Otherwise we'd still be living in trees and cooking on wood stoves."

"Sounds too complicated," commented Mallup. "I'm willing to take advantages, all right. But I want to do the choosing."

"But Grandfather, that's just exactly why we have scientists and doctors. They *know*. How can you set yourself up against them?"

Mallup folded the omelette over, took it from the fire, put half on Victoria's plate, half on his own. "Don't set myself against them. Live and let live's my motto. Who's for coffee?"

"Grandfather, how can you use that disgraceful old pot? It isn't as though we didn't have a perfectly good electric drippolator."

"Wouldn't use that damned engine on a bet. And my pot hasn't been the same since the time you started to wash it out. You wouldn't believe it..." he

turned to the others with greater animation than he had yet shown "...but that's exactly what she did. Tried to wash my coffee pot."

"It's unhygienic, like most all of the things you use and do. Oh, Grandfather—if you'd only realize how much better off, how much healthier, happier, and everything you'd be in an Age Adjustment Center! How much more useful you'd be to yourself and society!"

MALLUP spoke through a full mouth, unperturbed. "That so? All depends how you look at it. Maybe I'd enjoy having my bloodpressure taken once a week instead of six times a year and being set to weave or knit, or whatever socially useful work the consulting psychiatrist decides suits me best until the same character says, 'Mallup? Mallup? Oh, that old crock? Finish him up and send him to the crematorium—we need the space.' Maybe I would and maybe I wouldn't."

Judy jumped up from the table. "You're impossible!" she said with passion. "Just impossible! You talk like a—like a

mallie." She turned and ran from the room.

"You do for sure," observed Hank. "Are you, huh?"

"Henry! Stop that! How dare you talk to Mr. Mallup that way?"

"Leave the boy alone, Carrie." He poured himself more coffee, unruffled. "No, son. I'm a Patient. Good as any, better than some. Have my chart handy at all times—follow doctors' orders—co-operate from here to hell and gone."

"Including regular check-ups?" asked Victoria.

"Sure. With all doctors do for people, I can't understand running away from them." He looked directly at Cyrus. "Those that do are letting their feelings get ahead of their minds. Like Judy said, they're here to help us. Why, they've saved my life a couple of times. At least, I've lived and been under doctors' care at the same time."

"No coincidence," murmured Victoria.

MALLUP conceded, "Maybe. Hey, you—Henry. Why don't you go out and find

Judy? Ask her to sing you some of those Caducean Sunday school songs. That'll make her happy."

"I don't want to," said Hank.

"Hank." Cyrus put order and pleading into his tone.

"Aw... Sure, Gramps. Be seeing you."

"Nice boy," commented Mallup. "Favor your daughter or his father?"

"What? Uh... I'm not sure."

"Mmmm. You don't act like a working grandfather, Tarn. Now I'd never have any doubt about who Judy looks like."

"Well, Hank..."

"Tain't important. Now, what I was saying: it could have been coincidence, but it didn't have to be. Doctors spend years learning what to do. Maybe saving lives is putting it too strong. But they can make things a lot easier all around."

"Euthanasia," suggested Victoria.

"I suppose so. But I wasn't thinking of that. I was remembering a friend of mine—about my age. Didn't have my sense, though—married twice. Once was enough for me. Anyway,

both his women kicked off. First one died during the war: radiation. Thought he'd never get over it—miserablest human being I ever did see. Tell you all about how unhappy he was before you could say, 'Have a drink.' And when you managed to pour him one, he'd cry into it. Unhappy," he added in explanation.

"I see," said Cyrus.

"WELL, AT long last he run out of grief and tried again. Real nice woman, too—didn't nag, made him comfortable, laughed at his jokes. Anyway, she died too, a few years back. Looked like we were all set for another round of hard mourning, but the orderlies picked him up, and the doctors put him on a program of anti-depressant shots. They worked fine. No moaning—no resignation, even. No loss of memory either. Just happy and satisfied."

"That's monstrous!" exclaimed Cyrus. "No one has a right to interfere with such a private emotion."

"That so? What good would his private emotion have done

him? And it wouldn't have helped her any, either."

"I'm curious to know what happened to your friend after he was cured of his grief," said Victoria.

"Well, to tell the truth, maybe the anti-depressant shots worked a little too well. Got so he didn't give much of a damn about anything: work, washing, changing his clothes, going for his checkups, following doctors' orders. Just sat around being satisfied all the time. He was in an Age Adjustment Center by then, and you can't get away with being socially useless there. So they euthanized him."

"Thus demonstrating how doctors spend years learning what to do," taunted Victoria.

Mallup grinned at her. "You're hard on the doctors, Carrie. They do what they can."

"'Do what they can,'" she repeated. "Deciding whether you're fit for your chosen occupation—arbitrarily assigning you to a more suitable one if your IQ is too low or too high. Judging if you're fit to marry, and if you are, to predict

whether you'll have a satisfactory sex-life with your chosen husband or wife, refusing to endorse a license unless it seems likely. Saying what genes and chromosomes make the optimum combinations (optimum for what?)—forbidding parenthood to those with different ones. Performing 'indicated' hysterectomies, sterilizations, abortions. Adjusting Patients to a society which may not be to their taste, conditions they might improve, handicaps they could overcome. Quieting the indignant with psycho-pharmacology, and the outraged with electro-tranquilization. Forcing the dissident to testify against themselves with parapentathol. Killing those who have 'out-lived their social usefulness', or suffer prolonged pain—or perhaps have maladies they are incompetent to diagnose."

MALLUP belched politely behind his hand. "That was a mighty pretty speech, Carrie. Only one thing wrong with it: everything's in black and white."

"Whereas it ought to be all in white, for the ministering

angels." A moment ago Cyrus had been uneasy at Victoria's indiscretion—now he was capping it.

"No, you got me wrong. I'm a Patient because it suits me. If it doesn't suit somebody else, I don't say they ought to fall flat on their faces. But there's room—all the space from black to white—between looking on the doctor as God and seeing him as the devil. The doctor says (you say he says—I don't know one way or the other) he checks your IQ and won't let you be a farmer if you're smart enough for an engineer. All right—why not go somewhere and farm, and pretend you're dumber than you are? He won't let you marry. Men and women have managed to get in bed together without, quite a while. He says no kids—do you have to tell him? He can't cut you up if you're not handy. At least, I haven't heard about long distance surgery so far."

"But that's exactly—I mean..."

MALLUP shook his head. "No, it isn't. The Mallies

—people something like you and old John Rald—are *fighting* the medarchy, trying to change it. You aren't satisfied to dodge or hide out or get along. Black and white. Like Judy. If I'm right, you're wrong. Revolution."

"Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," quoted Cyrus, feeling not only foolish but reckless.

"Maybe. But who's doing the resisting? A few mallies here, a few mallies there. Things aren't changed that way, never have been. I mean *really* changed. Change happens when conditions are ripe for it, not when a few people decide the hour has come and holler, 'To the barricades, comrades!'

"Sure the medarchy cracks down. What would you expect? They're running things and they're going to save people if they have to kill them doing it. Naturally there's people who don't know which fork to use, and naturally these people find a place in the Healthfare State, just as they would in any other. Some get to be doctors who don't like being called in the night just because your wife's

in labor, so they call up the hospital and tell them to hold things up with drugs while they have their sleep out. But there's always been doctors like that."

"But you didn't *have* to go to them," Cyrus broke in.

MALLUP shrugged. "Matter of degree. Just as likely to hit one by chance when you have a choice as when you haven't. Same with those who become orderlies, MPs or sub-cutes—they'd have been cops or prison guards. You don't like them, I don't like them—seems to me the best way to avoid them is not to give them an excuse or a chance to get at you, not by standing up and shouting, 'You're a sadist, you're a sadist!' All you do is make it tough for yourselves."

"It's a point of view," admitted Cyrus, half willing to let the subject drop, but still tempted to outargue the old man. "Maybe you're old enough to avoid the worst aspects of the system for the rest of your life. Maybe if I'm careful enough I could, too. But what about the younger ones? Benevolent despotisms are all

benevolence at first, all despotism in the end.

"When the doctors took over, it was just because they were needed. But you can't run a society with just doctors and nurses and laboratories. You have to have discipline, if only to keep the Patients in line. Hence the orderlies. But the orderlies were no good for checking charts, spotting non-cooperative individuals, cranks. So we got the trained Medical Police. But what could MPs do about mallies who conspired, propagandized, actively resisted? Answer: the subcuties.

"Now children are betraying parents—for their own good. 'Remind your folks to have their shots, Johnny.' 'Did they have their shots, dear?' 'No? They don't like shots? Thank you, Johnny—we'll check on it.' Soon every child will be given a regular injection of parapentathol—and every intimacy of the home will be in dossiers. Perhaps the very, very clever will still find some way to get around it. But it's not dignified, and there will be more and more mallies who won't adjust to society or with-

draw from it. Won't pretend injustice and horror doesn't exist, or preserve a remnant of their own selfrespect while letting others lose theirs."

MALLUP chuckled. "Rather be dignified than comfortable, ay? Personally, I'd rather be comfortable. What's your dignity going to get you? A thorough examination of your mind—stuff dragged up you wanted to forget years and years ago and thought you had. Then treatment—the works. Electro-tranquilization, hypno-paedia, whatever they've got to remodel you with. Why, you'd probably come out screaming for a doctor every time you sneezed."

"Surely..." began Victoria. Then she shook her head. "Haven't you any sympathy for...those who feel that way?" She looked strangely pale to Cyrus, as though the strain of the conversation, counterpointing their situation in a minor key, was suddenly too much.

"Sympathy? I don't know. Why can't they get along the way I do? I carry my charts

and don't try to figure out what's in them every time they change the code. I take my shots when they're indicated—and they're indicated oftener and oftener at my age—swallow my vitamins and whatever else is prescribed. Pay the Credit Bureau promptly. Doesn't bother me at all.

"Every so often I have to cope with them. 'Psychopathic personality,' they say; 'claustrophobia, demophobia, cardiac-neurosis. See Dr. Soandso, the psychiatrist.' I see him. (I have to pay anyway, and if I don't keep my appointment the subcuties'll be around to ask me why.) 'Why don't you move to town, Mr. Mallup?' he asks me; 'Do you dream of crowds, or being crushed? I realize you must enjoy working for Dr. Tree, but don't you think it's time to give up work like that. Don't you ever feel it's slightly antisocial not to be with people of your own age? What would happen if everybody did what you're doing? We've had very satisfactory results with indrawn people once they've become part of a larger group. Especially at your age. And

while Secarros has the finest collection of medical men in the country, there are no clinical facilities there. And so on.'

MALLUP cleared his throat and tapped the table with his finger, a snide grin on his face. "Now the trick with these head-shrinkers is to get them talking. They never get a chance, they're so busy listening all day. Once you get them started, there's no stopping them.

"I feed them some keywords: 'Peacefulness' 'Relaxation' 'Symbiosis with nature'—I tell it feels good to hoe or chop wood. I never mention how much better it is just to sit around in the sun and do nothing—a mallie'd come right out with that and fight for his rights. I never suffer from insomnia because the nights are quiet, and you haven't piled up a lot of troubles to worry over. I ask them if they've never taken a vacation just to get some of the things I have all year around. Sure enough—they've all been to Yosemite for a week, or camped in the Rockies, fished in the Sierras,

or envied the bigshots who live here just like I do. When I'm done with them they let me live the way I want. They even cheer me on."

"But what about the psychiatrists' question? What would happen if everyone acted this way?"

"For one thing, everyone wouldn't. Most people like to be doctored, to be told what to do and what not to do. Saves thinking. Like the army used to be. Remember, that's how the Medarchy happened in the first place: we begged them to take over when responsibility got too much for us, with all the radiation sickness and bacteriological warfare. And nobody can say they haven't made things better. No more unfit administrators, no more alcoholic statesmen, dictators with crippled arms, or ambisexual conquerors like Julius Caesar. No more conquerors at all, since the psychologists began controlling all symptoms of aggression. And not just here, but in Russia, too—between our doctors and theirs' they melted the Iron Curtain fast. The medarchy and the Medbuero. No

more national secrets, no more refusal to exchange ideas and information. No more armies or manpower wasted in making munitions. Just healthy physical training, used to drain swamps, rebuild atomized cities and the slums in the others, control epidemics. Maybe the mallies would like to go back to the old ways, but you don't have to be a good Patient to prefer the medical one."

CYRUS SAID, "You can always buy security at the price of liberty," and wished that the phrase didn't have to sound quite so pompous.

"The doctors were asked to take over when science created a Frankenstein monster in thermonuclear weapons," Victoria said, looking still paler than before. Cyrus wondered how he could cut the conversation short, and tried unsuccessfully to catch her eye. "They thought medicine was the unique profession which combined science and humanity. They never read Lord Acton."

"They know what they're doing," Mallup insisted. "I may not like some of them per-

sonally, but I can get along with them. If I don't bother them, they don't bother me. They're too busy to care whether you approve or disapprove—so long as you don't go around trying to organize an opposition. That's bringing back politics, and the scientific mind's got no time to waste on anything so unscientific. They're really doing everything they can for the good of humanity."

"Exactly," said Cyrus. "Sincere, dedicated men, sure of what they're doing. Gods or fathers. But adults outgrow the need of fathers, and give *voluntary* allegiance to their gods. I don't want to get along with sincere, dedicated men who do things for my own good. I want to be free of them."

"No giving up of any freedom for any security? Myself, I'll trade—though I'm liable to hedge a bit. The only place it's really important to be free is in the mind."

"How free is yours?" asked Victoria. She stood up abruptly, holding on to the edge of the table with both hands. "I... Excuse me."

Cyrus reached for her so quickly he kicked over his chair. "What's the matter?" He put his arms around her shoulders. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing... I— A little dizzy. I'm sorry."

"Better lie down on my bed awhile," offered Mallup, rising and opening a door off the kitchen. "Help her in, Tarn."

"I'm all right now," she protested.

"Don't argue." Cyrus made his voice firm, guiding her into the small, faintly musty room, and pushing her gently toward the gray-blanketed single bed.

"How do you feel?" asked Mallup. "Faint or queasy?"

"Queasy," she answered, lying back and closing her eyes.

"Got something for it. Hold on a minute."

CYRUS WATCHED with startled interest while the old man walked over to pull a section of the wall outward. Now he looked closely he could see that one side of the piano hinges were set flush against a narrow batt while the other side showed, despite its paint. But one would have to know in ad-

vance it was there to discover it.

Mallup reached in and came out with a small bottle of brown liquid. "Hold on a minute while I get a spoon from the kitchen," he called over his shoulder as he started out. Cyrus stared with fascination at the suddenly-revealed contents of the recess. Not satisfied with his first cursory glance, he peered boldly in.

"Here, Carrie—swallow this. Just nux vomica—out of style, maybe, but it can't hurt you."

The shallow closet was only the width of the studs between which it was set, except for the lower part, which had been deepened—evidently by the addition of a small overhung enclosure on the outside. Its upper shelves were the equivalent—and more—of the long outmoded and forbidden home medicine cabinet. Cyrus could see the bottles, vials and boxes, some of which were strange to him, others familiar: aspirin, milk of magnesia, calomine lotion, Vapo-rub, ephedrine drops, ointment, merthiolate, gentian violet, liniment. He had no idea what Dr. Tree paid

Mallup in wages, but a large portion must be finding its way into the black market in drugs.

"Thanks," said Victoria.

"Better stay lying down," advised Mallup.

"Self-medication," murmured Cyrus. "Prescribing without a license. For a man who gets along with the medarchy as well as you do, you certainly have a fine collection here."

"That so?" Unperturbed, Mallup replaced the nux vomica bottle on the shelf. "I use liniment when I need it and aspirin when I have a headache. (Haven't had one for years.) Nobody's bothered me yet. I don't make a principle of it and insist that the Healthfare State has got no right to tell me what I can take and what I can't."

CYRUS' ATTENTION was now on the rows of books, some in excellent condition, others old and battered. He could not read all the titles before Mallup swung the concealing panel back, but he saw enough to recognize one of the most complete libraries of books on the proscribed Medi-

cal Index he had encountered. "Science and Health" nestled against "Doctor Pierce's Home Medical Book"; Booth's "History of Osteopathy and Twentieth Century Medical Practice" haughtily shouldered Emile Coue. Bates and Huxley were obviously comfortable together, but there was a hostile, empty space on the shelf between Gaylord Hauser and Adelle Davis. Jacobson's books on relaxation, Grantley Dick Read's "Childbirth Without Fear"; "The Science, Art and Philosophy of Chiropractic" by Daniel David Palmer; Shaw's Selected Essays and "The Doctor's Dilemma"; "The Autobiography of A. T. Still", were juxtaposed in catholic conglomeration.

"Well, well," said Cyrus. "Well, well."

"I think she's feeling a bit better now," said Mallup blandly.

"Yes, I am," agreed Victoria. "And I feel foolish too, for making such a spectacle. What on earth are you staring at, Cyrus?"

"A fascinating corroboration of Mr. Mallup's attitude to-

ward the Ama. At least a hundred books guaranteed to upset Patients' minds and make them uncooperative."

MALLUP shrugged. "I don't sell them. I don't try to get people to read them, I don't lend them around. I don't say I even agree with any of them. I just enjoy having them around."

"But just owning them would make a diagnosis of paranoia certain."

"Have to find them first. You going to turn me in?"

"What good does it do you to have them?"

"Does it *have* to do me good? Doctors and mallies are always trying to do good—I leave it to them."

"But the principle..." she began.

"Haven't any principles—that and whiskey's what keeps me healthy. You better rest here, Carrie. Time for me to go outside and pretend Rafe Tree gets his money's worth by having me on the place. Make yourself at home, Tarn."

"Thanks. Thanks for everything. You know, I haven't said

how much I appreciate your letting us stay here. . . .”

“Then don’t. Told you I was a hermit. Like to be by myself most of the time—didn’t mind Judy when she was smaller, but now she’s another person in the house, not a child. Anyway, I can go for weeks—months, sometimes—without talking. Except to myself. Slip out when Rafe Tree comes around to gab. Then, all of a sudden, I’ve had all of my own company I want. Usually about that time, old John sends one of his friends out here. Mallies, or—mmmm—people like you. Then I talk my head off for a couple of days. Get it out of my system.”

“The kind of talking you do some of the time makes me wonder if you wouldn’t be just as well working with the mallies.”

MALLUP laughed. “Too old and sensible. Don’t agree with the mallies any more than I do with a lot of doctors. I don’t mind being hospitable sometimes, if it’s handy, but I’m not taking sides.”

Victoria said, “There are

mallies holding all kinds of opinions, but they work together for freedom.”

“That so? Maybe they’ll set up a worse society than the one you—they—overthrew.”

“Possibly,” said Cyrus. “On the other hand it seems more probable it would level out.”

“Sure. Revolutions always level out. Then you have to get a new revolution to change the levels. Well, see you later.” He went out softly, closing the door behind him.

Cyrus knelt beside the bed, laid his face against Victoria’s arm. “What upset you?”

She touched his temple and ear with the fingers of her free hand. “So silly of me. I must have been more worried than I thought.”

“You won’t have to worry much longer.”

Wouldn’t she? The danger hovered, real and ominous. They had both been rash, talking so openly to Mallup. Why should they trust him? Just because he possessed black market drugs and forbidden books? Weren’t those precisely the props one would expect a sub-cute to have? And he had un-

doubtedly been listening at the door upstairs. On the other hand...

ON THE OTHER hand, Cyrus did not know the identity of the messenger who was to come for them tomorrow, nor the means he would use to get them to the airfield. If he had not known the field's location from a previous occasion, that too would have been veiled, lest he and Hank be picked up on the trip to Secaros. Conspiracy was second nature to him, decidedly second—he never felt thoroughly at home in it. Intellectually, he agreed readily enough on the necessity of being miserly with information; emotionally, it disturbed him profoundly to have their whole future in the hands of an unknown person, an unrevealed means.

And that unknown person might be Mallup.

"No!" he decided aloud.

"What?" She sat up, startled.

"Sorry. Just thinking."

"Cyrus, who will run the station now? And the paper?"

"I don't know. There was no point in my knowing."

"I was only hoping that whoever took it over would do a good job."

He spoke with heavy bitterness. "What's the good of hoping? How good a job can even the best, most sincere, completely convinced propagandist do? Let's not fool ourselves—we aren't revolutionists, we're rebels. So long as Patients don't feel that the Ama oppresses them, we are talking to incomprehension. When Marat exhorted, the sans culottes could see the gulf between the noble and themselves. When Lenin spoke, the workers and peasants had obvious reason to vote with their feet. But when we tell our hearers the medarchy robs them of every liberty except the right to die, they don't believe us. Because the doctors are working night and day to make them live longer, aren't they? To make them healthier, happier, more useful?"

"One of the reasons I asked was because of something Alex said. He suspects—no, that's too strong a word—he wonders if there isn't someone inside our

own group giving information to the subcuties."

CYRUS, TOO, had he wondered, over and over again, since the raids. The enemy within... The double vulnerability. You might plan craftily or improvise brilliantly, take every precaution—it availed you nothing if the man who planned, the man who made the very suggestion which plugged the last loophole was...

"Coincidence," he muttered, trying to keep from communicating his fear to her. "Mutual suspicion is the cabin-fever of the underground. Was that all he said?"

"More or less. To tell the truth, he annoyed me a little. Nothing overt, no passes or anything like that," she added hastily. "Just a—mmm—sort of atmosphere. Enough to make me glad his place was too small to use."

"Well, I'm not going to be jealous of Alex."

"You don't have to be jealous of anyone. Ever."

"That's good. I won't be, then. He got the charts to you all right?"

"Charts? No. I phoned him, as we agreed. He told me when to expect you, but nothing else. Cyrus! Is it very bad?"

"I don't know." There was an unpleasant taste, faintly oily, in his mouth. "He was supposed to deliver a new set of charts for all of us—it wouldn't have been smart for me to travel with them. We were to switch to them after leaving here—just an added precaution if there was a delay or slip-up about the plane. They probably decided it wasn't necessary after all."

But he knew they hadn't. Could something have happened to Stuart Yester since he'd made out the hospital passes? If so...

"There's nothing to worry about," Cyrus said.

SHE REFUSED to be put off. "You think something's happened to the apparatus for forging charts, as well as the school and the station and the paper."

"No, I don't. I'm sure they decided we wouldn't need them."

"And if the machinery's bro-

ken down," she went on, "it means. . ."

"It wouldn't mean all the machinery. Not even all the local machinery. Just part of it."

"Just part of it. Translate that unfunctioning part into hysterectomies and osteotomies, eugenic abortions, sterilizations and tranquilizations which will be indicated, prescribed and performed."

"Victoria, it isn't like you to build so much on speculation."

"And if something's happened to Stuart. . ."

Then the plane won't show, he thought grimly, because he and I are the only two among the five of us who know the location of the field. Oh, the marvels of science. Once, you put a man on the wrack, or applied the thumbscrew to force him to talk—painful alike to victim, executioner, interrogator, witnesses, society. Sometimes he died with his mouth still shut. An unhappy business. Now you simply gave him an injection and he surrendered his deepest secrets without resistance. No agonies, no broken bones, no silence

unto death. Neat. "Wait a minute!"

"What?"

"If something happened to Stuart, they'd know about Alex right away. I'll phone him—what's the number?"

She gave it to him. "Be careful."

"Of course. Feel better now?"

"Yes. I'll get up."

"Rest a little while. I'll come back and tell you what Alex says."

"All right. Phone's in the kitchen."

HE COULD hear Judy singing outside. Evidently her angry mood had softened. The tune was familiar, but he had never heard the words:

*There is only one way,
There is only one way
To be healthy and
happy:*

"See the doctor," we say.

So the Caduceans had their hymnal already. Did they baptize by squirting hypodermics? He picked up the phone, dialed. The ring was steady, hypnotic, unanswered. The girl began another hymn.

*Rock of surg'ry pre-
scribed for me
Heal me like the Great
MD;
Heal my bones and my
insides;
All health in Medicine
resides.*

The empty ringing continued, in time to the logical sequence in his mind. If they picked up Stuart, they picked up Alex; if they picked up Alex, the three of them would be...

"Hello?" The voice was guarded, tense, not quite right.

"Dr. Caliggs?"

"Speaking." Now the tones were recognizably those of Alex.

"My name is Tarn. Cyrus Tarn."

There was silence for a moment. He heard Hank say, half interestedly, half scornfully, "Know any more?" Then Alex: "Yes, Mr. Tarn?"

"I was referred to you—my doctor was going to send you some capsules for me. I wondered if they had come."

"I haven't gotten them. Not yet."

"I see. I...hope nothing's happened to the shipment."

"Hmm. Most unlikely, I'd say. Perhaps...perhaps your doctor changed his mind about the necessity."

"That's probably it. Thank you, Doctor. If they should come..."

"I'll call you."

"Thanks."

He hung up, at once relieved and uneasy. Logic was logic, even in reverse: if Alex hadn't been picked up, then Stuart and John Rald were all right, too. But he couldn't believe they had lightly changed their minds about making and sending new false charts. It might be a superfluous precaution, yet they had all agreed on it. Nothing was more unlikely...

Aware of eyes fixed on his back, he turned to face Judy Larch, with Hank behind her. The girl was looking at him speculatively, appraisingly. Suspiciously.

III

HER VERY innocence was a greater possible danger than Mallup's listening at the door or any trail pursued by the subcuties from the hospital to Secarros.

Suppose Judy mentioned to the MP at the depot that a man named Tarn was visiting her grandfather! Why suppose Judy even knew her? Because it was a logical acquaintance: Judy, awe and reverence reserved for doctors, would undoubtedly look for some bond with those below the sacred caste within the medarchy. It might be smart to ignore Judy; it might be wise to try for a favorable impression. Cyrus didn't know. . .

"I heard you singing outside, Miss Larch. It was fine."

Her blush came quickly, faded slowly. "Everybody calls me Judy. No matter what you do around here, they think you're still a child."

"Well, I'll call you Miss Larch, if you don't mind."

She giggled, "Oh, I don't mind, if you don't."

Hank said, "She's been teaching me those Sunday school songs."

Judy blushed again. "I hope you don't object." She was half apologetic, half defiant.

"Why, of course not." He sat down, warning himself not to be too effusive, to stay within

his role. But exactly what was his role? "Do you sing in the choir? Or doesn't the Church of the Caduceus have choirs?"

"I'm hungry again," Hank announced.

"There's still some duck," said Judy. "Sit down—I'll get it for you. It's still a couple of hours till supper."

"Don't let us make a nuisance of ourselves, Miss Larch."

"It's no trouble." She set the remains of the duck, a knife and fork in front of the boy. "I don't mind doing things. I only mind when Grandfather gets one of his streaks and starts talking like a mallie. He's so *obstinate*. No, there aren't choirs—everybody just sings together. After the Testimonies."

"Where's Carrie?" asked Hank.

"Lying down. She was tired."

DID JUDY know about her grandfather's store of illicit medicines, his forbidden books? Surely there must have been times enough, Cyrus thought, when she was younger. . . Perhaps not.

"If he would only see how much better off he'd be in an Age Adjustment Center. But he's always thought he knew better than anyone else. When I was a little girl he brought me here, instead of putting me into an Integrating Home."

Cyrus shook his head commiseratingly.

"And he somehow persuaded Dr. Tree to fix it up so that I could stay with him. Against all Medical Regulations. I'm not criticizing Dr. Tree. . ."

"I'm sure you're not."

"He's the most wonderful man imaginable. I always think of him when I pray to the Great Physician. They have the cutest babies in the Integrating Homes, so healthy and just *right*. I can't understand why Grandfather didn't send me to one of them."

"I'm going out again," said Hank. "See you."

Cyrus watched him leave. It was interesting that Judy should have fastened on the babies in the Homes—they were such a minute percentage of the inmates. The vast majority were just about Hank's age. Victoria would have been

older than the average by four or five years. What a nice irony it would have been, if Boyd Carling had had a patron like Dr. Tree, to help him circumvent the Ama. And if the situations had been completely reversed—would Mallup have become a dedicated worker in the underground, and Judy another Victoria? Good old forked stick of heredity versus environment: the excluded middle. As it was, Judy was on the way to developing a nice little conflict over her picture of Dr. Tree as a surrogate god and the med-ar-chy as the final repository of wisdom. He doubted if the Church of the Caduceus could resolve the contradiction involved in his abetting her grandfather's evasion of a medical regulation to her satisfaction.

"Penny for your thoughts."

"Uh? Oh, excuse me. I guess I wasn't really thinking. Just daydreaming." Would the excuse make her suspicious again? Daydreaming could be a symptom of maladjustment.

SHE DIDN'T take it so. "I often do, myself," she con-

fided. "About how much nicer it would have been if I'd been brought up in an Integrating Home, or how much better Grandfather would be in an Age Adjustment Center, or what it will be like when I'm old enough to join the Health Auxiliaries. Do you like fish?"

"Ay? Oh, yes."

"That's good. Grandfather went fishing this morning." She went to the refrigerator. "He catches them—I clean them." She took out a creel and dumped its contents into the sink.

"Can I help you?"

"Oh, no. I don't mind, really, most of the time. I just get tired of cleaning them when I don't catch them." She began to sing again,

*When the charts are
read up yonder, I'll
be there;*

*Vaccines, antitoxins,
x-rays everywhere.*

*When my chart is read
up yonder, let the
Great Physician ponder*

*I'll be healthy, I'll be
happy...*

She broke off and turned

around. "Don't let me interrupt," said Victoria in an odd voice.

"Oh, you're not interrupting, Carrie. I was just cleaning fish for supper." Victoria shuddered. "You feel rested now?"

"Yes, thanks."

"You look sort of pale. Why don't you let me take you over to Dr. Tree? Unless you have a referral to another doctor here? He won't mind a bit, seeing why you're tired, and I know he's home now."

Cyrus cleared his throat. False charts would pass an MP or a subcute, but not a practising physician giving an examination.

VICTORIA smiled and shook her head. "Thank you, dear. I will, if I feel tired again. It's always better to go to a doctor sooner than later, isn't it?"

"But some people are so obstinate," the girl cried. "They won't see the *simplest* things."

"Isn't that one of the things your Caducean Church can do? Show them?" asked Victoria.

"They don't come. I've tried and tried to get Grandfather

to go, over and over. All he says is, 'Religion's like whiskey—not fit to take until it's aged some.'

"Supper ready?" asked Hank, coming in and slumping into a chair.

"Soon," said Judy, returning to the fish.

"You just ate," remarked Cyrus.

"Can't help it—I'm hungry."

"Go and wash then," ordered Victoria. "And be sure to get your ears clean."

How quick we are to put fear away from us, marveled Cyrus. Let us breathe freely for a moment or two, and we are as ready to be concerned with whether Hank's ears are clean, or what we're going to eat, as though danger and destruction were no closer in time and space than the Taiping Rebellion, or the kingdom of the Monomatapa.

Here, protected by the aegis of Dr. Tree (Aaron's rod?) we act... normally. But not quite. Even in the most secure moments—and this is not one of them—the threads of doubt and suspicion and fear make a pattern. Or a rope. And have,

ever since the day Norah said, "He was really annoyed and warned me against prescribing for myself—told me it was a pure, hysterical fantasy to imagine I couldn't tolerate a massive dose..." Or since Boyd Carling decided the Ama was Antichrist, and he would defy it to the death...

Normal...? It had not been like Victoria to give way under strain, ever. And she had looked so oddly at him, when she came in the kitchen from Mallup's room. "Excuse me," he muttered, and went looking for her.

SHE WAS sitting on the bed upstairs, listless. She raised her head as he came in.

"What's the matter," he asked—"feeling badly again?"

"No, I'm all right. You shouldn't have let your sense of duty tear you away from the kitchen."

"What? What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing at all."

"Victoria..."

"You'd better call me Carrie. Mr. Mallup doesn't seem to be above listening at doors."

He looked at her helplessly. "Please tell me..."

"You ought to go back and keep on charming schoolgirls. You never can tell when the talent will come in handy."

Victoria jealous? Jealous of a child? It was so absurd, so out of character, that he was completely bewildered. "I was only being polite," he began. "I thought she looked strangely at me when..."

"I'm sure she must have. Well, she's quite pretty, and undoubtedly very healthy."

"Victoria! This is unbelievable. She's a child."

Her silence was pointed, explicit. *So was I—you like them young.* The unspoken words were thrown toward him.

"You're unreasonable. Impossible. You're not acting remotely like yourself."

"I'm sure that's what men always say when they're tired of a woman. I'm not like myself, so you had better go and find someone who is." She sat still, two tears moving slowly down her cheeks.

"Victoria..." He paused, knowing no way to reach, no way to address this strange,

this incomprehensible Victoria, so utterly different from the ever self-contained, poised, invincible woman he had known. A Victoria who wept causelessly, who accused him wildly. A Victoria who put an added emotional burden on him at a time like this, to multiply everything else harrasing them...

HE STOPPED short. How selfish, how egocentric could he be? She was upset, desperate—nothing less than desperation would drive her to tears—and he was busy trying to classify her trouble, trying to build up a nice, reasonable speech to present her with. Resolve whatever was troubling her with a concise, smooth argument. Was he a man or an idiot?

"Sweetheart, I don't know what's making you feel this way, but whatever I've done, please forgive me. Help me make you happy, that's all I want. Please, Victoria." He took her in his arms, felt her momentary resistance, refused to be rebuffed.

She cried with long, shudder-

ing sobs. He held her closely, caressing her back, running his hands up to her hair, ears, temple. She relaxed against him. Finally she pulled away just a little. "Give me your handkerchief."

He smiled helplessly. "I haven't got one. And I don't think I packed any. Here, try my shirt-tail."

She took it and blew her nose. "I must look a sight. And I'm a fool besides. Forgive you? You must forgive me. I don't know what came over me."

"The strain," he suggested. "Being so close to escape..."

"I've had strains before. Cyrus, do you think you could put up with an hysterical woman?"

"I can put up with you, if putting up is the right expression, which I doubt."

Hank opened the door. "Hey, you guys—Judy's got the fish going and the old man's sitting down, chomping his gums. What about saving the smooching till after, huh?"

"Henry, that's no way..." Hank closed the door quietly. "You'd better go on down while

I try to make my eyes look presentable."

"They look all right."

"Don't be masculine. Go on."

IT WAS A very bad time for her nerves to give way. There was so much that could happen between now and tomorrow night; so many possible emergencies before they got on the plane, in which he might be dependent on her coolness and judgement.

In the kitchen, he looked searchingly at Mallup and his granddaughter. Neither appeared to be hiding suspicion. "Sorry to keep you waiting."

"Didn't," said Mallup. "But Carrie better get here soon, if she wants to taste those trout at their best."

"I'm here," said Victoria, "and I certainly do. They smell wonderful." Cyrus' quick glance showed him no sign of reddened eyes.

"Rafe Tree keeps the stream loaded with them. Don't know why. He doesn't fish. Doesn't eat them, either."

Judy, lips pursed at the implied criticism of a doctor, set

a huge platter in the center of the table. Sliding into her seat, she bowed her head slightly. "We thank the Great Physician for nourishment, and for the health to get and enjoy it." Her voice was clear and earnest.

"Mmmm," said Mallup. It might have been an "amen", it might not. He picked up a fish by the tail, expertly filleting off first one side, then the other with his fork, regarding the bare backbone with satisfaction. "Mmmm."

VICTORIA looked appreciatively at Judy. "They're delicious."

"You bet," agreed Hank. "Say, can you go fishing whenever you want?"

"Mostly," said Mallup, operating on another trout. "I can usually find the time."

"Boy! This'd be a great place to live."

"That's what I think, son. Why I'm here."

"In spite of what would be best for you," said Judy.

"The young always know what's best for everybody," said Mallup. "Get to my age, you're not so sure."

"I wasn't giving my own opinion—the doctors say so. Even if you treat me like a child, you can't pretend *they're* too young to know what they're talking about."

"What I like about the country." Mallup made the apparently irrelevant statement as though it clinched an argument.

When Cyrus looked his inquiry, the old man went on, as though spelling out an elementary axiom. "The Ama's urban. City born—city-chained. The larger cities, particularly. Long before the medarchy, country doctors were out of date, except on TV. Small towns might have a doctor, maybe two—hardly a hospital. They sent their patients to the city. So the cities got to have everything, and when they had the machinery they had to have the people to run it, and what was the use of duplicating it all in the sticks?"

"You went to town to get your case histories taken, and your shots, and your prescriptions. The country just didn't pay off—it would take too many doctors, subcuties, MPs and orderlies to each Patient to

make any kind of a showing. And the country mallies never seem to make trouble. Either they take their medicine like little men, or else they just shut up about their aches and pains, and duck their periodic examinations until they die or stopped showing symptoms."

"Or resort to home remedies," dared Cyrus.

Mallup looked shocked. "Who'd do that? It's against medical regulations."

"Well, at least I'm glad to hear you say that," said Judy.

"Uh-huh." He turned to Cyrus. "Drink whiskey?"

"What? Oh. I've been known to."

JUDY SHOOK her head and rose to clear the table. "Please let me do the dishes this time," urged Victoria.

"Oh no, thank you, Carrie. It just takes a minute." She hummed a snatch of one of the hymn tunes, irritation at her grandfather apparently dissipated.

"At the h— some places they have plates you throw away. No washing them," said Hank.

"Plycelandin," interpreted

Judy. "They have them at Galentry. Everybody ought to use them—they're sanitary."

Mallup grunted. "Sanitary, all right. Food don't taste right on them."

"Oh, Grandfather, that's ridiculous. Plycelandin's absolutely tasteless."

"So's anything you put on them. Not for me. I'll pour us a drink, Tarn."

"Come on Henry. Bedtime."

Hank looked outraged. "Bedtime! It's not even dark yet."

"It doesn't matter. I want you to have a good night's sleep."

"Aw, I'm no baby."

"I should hope not. Ten is quite old enough to do things you'd rather not, when they're necessary."

"Aw..."

"Henry!"

"All right, all right—don't get in an uproar." Cyrus felt a twinge of sympathy for Hank. Victoria could be implacable when it seemed right to her. And yet, so helpless—as she had been earlier, in her unreasonable jealousy.

Mallup went into his room, returning with a bottle which

bore no label. "How'll you have it?"

"Straight, please."

"Good man. No use to spoil both whiskey and water by mixing what was never meant to be. Some people even put ice in a drink. Rrrrrr!" He poured generously into two tumblers. "Health."

CYRUS SIPPED his whiskey. It was good, but very light in color. Possibly moonshine, though he had the idea from somewhere that illicit distilling had stopped a long time ago. As he drank he realized he was tired, very tired. So soon as politeness made it possible, he would slip upstairs.

His so-carefully acquired sense of watchfulness suddenly alarmed him. "Excuse me," he began.

"It's Dr. Tree," exclaimed Judy, smiling widely. "Isn't that nice?"

"I'll be going," said Cyrus. "Good night."

"Sit down," said Mallup. "Rafe Tree don't bite."

The door opened; now it was too late to get out of the room unseen. Was this a trap? How

could he warn Victoria and Hank?

"Evening, everybody. Judy, you're prettier each day; I don't know how you do it. Chris, what did we ever do to deserve so fine a girl?"

He was lean enough to seem unusually tall. Cyrus, who had rather expected someone with plainer signs manifested on the man who enjoyed good food, owned a house of flamboyant architecture and called it Galentry, was faintly surprised at the thin lips, taut cheeks steel-smooth, old fashioned eyeglasses instead of contact lenses. Only the well-brushed silvery hair, the immaculate fingernails and teeth, the gaudy scarf wound high about his throat and tucked with careful negligence into the tweed sports jacket fitted into the preconceived picture.

Mallup waved a hand toward Cyrus. "Down from the city for a few days," he explained. "Dr. Tree, Cyrus Tarn. Don't know what *you* did—I always took care of my old woman while she was alive. Have a drink?"

RAPHAEL TREE smiled pleasantly, shook Cyrus' hand firmly. "Why not? Every man's bound to have one perverted taste—mine's for your liquor. Got a glass for me, Judy?"

Judy finished working on the tumbler she was polishing to a sparkle and set it down deferentially before him. Mallup pushed the bottle over. "This one's been worked on some, but there's more."

"There always is," said Tree, pouring. "You know," he said, turning to Cyrus, "Judy doesn't really approve of alcohol."

She blushed. "Oh, Dr. Tree, I wouldn't dream... I mean, I..." She turned away in confusion.

"Doctor knows best," grunted Mallup.

"About some things," amended Tree. "We never intrude authority in fields where we're not competent."

"Health and happiness," said Mallup. "Covers a lot of ground. Where do you come to the 'Keep Off' signs?"

Tree drank slowly. "It's hard to say, Chris. Probably not at the same spot with different

people. A man with an ulcer will probably have his private life more deeply invaded than one with a broken arm."

"Mightn't both be symptoms of a psychosomatic illness?" asked Cyrus.

Tree nodded. "Surely. And the only adequate judge is the physician. He'd be doing less than his duty if he didn't try to reach the anxiety which caused the ulcer, or made the patient accident-prone."

"I can't imagine anyone who wouldn't be grateful," said Judy, turning from the sink.

"Be surprised," said Mallup. "People are obstinate."

"Not so much obstinate as shortsighted," corrected Tree.

"They don't know what's good for them," ventured Cyrus.

Tree gave him a keen look. "Sometimes. More often it's an inability to see that what may be painful or distressing to them, personally—and at the moment—is the best for society."

"Mallies," suggested Cyrus.

TREE FROWNEED. "It's a loose term. Some of the in-

disciplined may be maladjusted—that's a matter for diagnosis. Others are simply uneducated. Perhaps we've been so busy with the present that we haven't given enough attention to the future. That's why it's so heartening to see a girl like Judy."

"No problems with her generation?"

"It's too soon to tell. All we know is that, so far, the level of indiscipline seems to be stationary. And it doesn't seem to make much difference whether we're dealing with people of Chris' age, or yours, or the next younger."

"Ah," said Cyrus. Was the Ama admitting it could never hope to wipe out maladjustment? No...and anyway, Tree was not the Ama.

"Sad example last week in Seattle. A man tried to kill an obstetrician when it was necessary to euthanize his newly-delivered child. The mother had been treated as usual, of course, and it usually isn't difficult to make the fathers understand."

Cyrus looked at Tree. The man was obviously no callous

monster. "What—what was wrong with the baby?"

"A number of things. They might have taken a chance on later correction if it hadn't been for a badly misshapen spine. The poor little fellow would never have had a chance at normal life. People staring, and then pretending elaborately. Then there would always be the danger of the Mercifuls... You know, we didn't begin to euthanize the new-born until we were startled by the sudden rise in the number of pre-adolescents who had to be thanatized. We'd overlooked the malformed births resulting from the war and post-war irradiation. We'd have been a nation of freaks if we hadn't tightened up. That's why we're so careful about who's allowed to beget and conceive. Even so, mistakes happen, like that one."

Mistake Jones; Error Smith; Blunder Johnson. Rest In Peace.

JUDY BUBBLED, "It's so darling to look at a little baby these days. They're always so perfect and cuddly. No

wonder the mothers are so proud of them. It makes you feel good all over."

"Mmmm," said Mallup, pouring again.

"Who actually makes decisions in such cases, Doctor?"

"The OB's responsible, but there's plenty of redtape to guard the Patients' rights. In extreme cases, the attending physician can take sole responsibility, but when I was in active practice I felt better with one or two confirming views. Among other things, if it's a one-man decision, a great many extra reports have to be made out, with ante-and post-mortem details included."

"It's a great responsibility," said Judy. "You'd think Patients would do everything to understand, instead of questioning what's done for them."

Tree shook his head indulgently. "The majority of Patients co-operate as well as they can. Unfortunately there's an old and deep-rooted tradition that a man's health and happiness are his own exclusive business. Privacy. Individuality. Like Chris."

"Let me go to hell in my

own way," confirmed Mallup amiably.

"Fine. The trouble is, when you go to hell in *your* own way, you don't go alone—you take others with you, either by physical or moral infection. In protecting the individual against his non-conforming impulses, we're protecting society against decay."

DESPITE his resolution, Cyrus couldn't help saying, "There used to be a theory that a society made up of all shades of opinion was healthier than one where everyone thought and acted alike."

"Oversimplification," said Tree. "No society ever tolerated members too far one side or the other of its norm. Dissent was banned as soon as it became a life-or-death matter. We don't ask everyone to think or act alike—there are fields in which anyone is free to disagree with his doctor."

"Such as?"

Tree waved an arm. "Art. Literature. Religion."

Mallup grunted. "Nothing scientific."

"How can you disagree on

what can be measured? Can you have diversity of opinion on whether the earth is round, or on the square root of minus two? Is astronomy a matter of opinion? Can you choose to disbelieve in inherited characteristics? Can you have a private idea of time, or an unequal-sided square, or vote on the composition of phenol?"

Cyrus restrained his impulse to ask, *Why not? Why not, even if you're wrong by every standard so far acknowledged?* Instead, he said, "You mentioned religion, art and literature as things in which disagreement was possible, Doctor. But hasn't the medarchy decided that non-representational painting, abstract sculpture, atonal music, extremely esoteric poetry, and whole categories of fiction, are symptomatic of a psychotic condition. And aren't those who believe in a physical ascent by Mahomet, or a literal revelation at Sinai, or any number of Christian dogmas considered subject to possibly dangerous illusions?"

FOR THE first time Tree's manner betrayed some stiff-

ness. "It isn't what the medarchy decides or considers, Mr. Tarn. We are dealing with facts when psychologists discover that mental aberration shows itself in certain forms.

"Anyone is free to prefer Van Gogh over Cezanne, or Elliot to Tennyson, and so on. And all abstract design isn't regarded as unhealthy, either—it's the extreme instances. When someone, for example, puts three blobs of prussian blue on a canvas of burnt umber, and titles the result, "*Mood After a Naval Engagement*", then the services of a psychiatrist are called for. Not only because the painter is very likely unstable, but because—if examination shows that he is—his instability can confirm a similar but latent instability on the part of those who look at his picture. As for religions—well, again, all societies have suppressed the more primitive ones and encouraged the more rational ones."

"Granting you are right, Doctor, this narrow choice isn't exactly what people mean by 'freedom'."

Tree tapped a cigaret on his

thumbnail, fitted it in a holder, accepted a light from Judy with a smile. "We didn't narrow the choice—science simply excluded the palpably false from the field of the permissible. You don't allow children to play with live bombs, or neurotics to indulge delusions. We have seen what happened when they were so allowed. If we had taken over earlier, we would certainly have averted the third world war—and perhaps some of those that went before. I could give you a very long list of famous men who ought to have been hospitalized. Instead they led nations into disasters for centuries. Alexander, Tamerlane, Napoleon, Hitler. . ."

"Franklin Roosevelt?" prodded Cyrus. "Lincoln? Jefferson?"

"Roosevelt certainly — the mind is affected by any malfunctioning of the body. Lincoln probably—what was called 'melancholia' in his day we should undoubtedly recognize as some form of paranoia. Jefferson?" Dr. Tree frowned. "I don't know. A man with some sort of rudimentary sci-

entific approach, but victim of all sorts of unscientific superstitions. Definitely an eccentric—possibly an advanced neurotic. I imagine we would have excluded Jefferson from public life as a precautionary measure.

"You may raise your eyebrows, Mr. Tarn, and think the loss greater than the gain—I assure you, you're wrong. For every Gandhi we would have suppressed, a dozen megalomaniac Stalins and Goebbelses would have been restrained. Our mistake is not in the application of scientific methods today, but in not applying them sooner. We should have accepted responsibility long before we did, long before it was forced on us by catastrophe. Previously we were too selfish, too narrow-minded. Saving lives and seeing that the lives were worth saving was some kind of ideal, not a necessity. We were too aloof, too tender. Afraid to excise a cancer because it might hurt. Waiting for the patients to come to us. Saying in effect, 'May I have your permission to save you from suffering?'"

"White man's burden," said Mallup.

TREE LAUGHED. "Treat me better than that, Chris, or I'll ship you off to an Age Adjustment Center after all."

"Grandfather would be so much happier, if he only realized." Judy had dried and put away the last dish. "I've been trying to tell him."

Mallup poured all around, emptying the bottle and shaking the last drops out. "Bunch of damned mummies—not a bottle of whiskey in the place."

"And no room for a still either," agreed Tree. "I told you Judy doesn't approve of alcohol. Youth is very strait-laced, and it's just as well—one doesn't tamper with regulations lightly."

"Then there are occasions when you feel it's all right to tamper with them?" ventured Cyrus.

"A few," admitted Tree. "When it's done by a responsible authority who has all the facts. As when I made it possible for Chris and Judy to live here together. Now Judy thinks I was wrong."

"Oh, no. No, I don't. Of course you know best, Dr. Tree."

Cyrus repressed a quotation from Goering, "In the Third Reich, I decide who is a Jew."

"But you've been reading Hygeia's *Guide for Patients*, ay? And it doesn't always agree with Rafe Tree? Tell me, have you read it all through?"

"Oh yes, three times. You have to know it thoroughly to get into the Health Auxiliaries."

"You've got a couple of years yet before you'll be eligible," Tree reminded her.

"I can hardly wait," she said simply.

"And when you finally get into the Ahas you'll pick yourself a genetically right boy and marry him?" Tree teased.

SHE BLUSHED. "I want to get married and have babies—if the doctors say I can. But I never thought of going into the Auxiliaries to meet boys. They're more important—they can do so much to help the Ama."

"Well, well—in the meantime, you've still got the church. Learn any more songs?"

"One," she confessed. "Would you like to hear it?"

"Of course," he replied. "I always enjoy your singing."

*Shots will help me, this
I know,
Because the doctor tells
me so;
He is wise and kind and
strong;
He will cure me all life
long.*

*Shots will help me,
Checks will guard me,
Pills will cure me—
Doctor tells me so.*

"It's mostly for the little kids," she apologized. "They don't understand the harder ones. But I like it because it's got a real swing to it."

"And you sing it as though you meant it," complimented Tree.

"I do mean it, Doctor."

"I'm sure you do. I hope you'll mean it just as much when you get into the Ahas."

"Why shouldn't I? Sometimes you sound as though—as though you didn't like the Auxiliaries. Especially when you call them by that mean nickname."

TREE'S VOICE softened.
"Was I mean, Judy? I'm

sorry if I hurt your feelings. Like them? I suppose many, if not most, are fine young people, using their surplus physical energy in medically helpful ways, spotting the ill and the maladjusted, taking some of the load off the orderlies and the subcutes, acting as an educating influence on the Patients and supporting the Ama in its work. But just because it is a lay group anyone who can pass a simple test—oh, I know it seems hard to you right now, Judy—can join. There are no years of training, and further years of internship, to weed out the undesirables.

"And because it's unofficially approved by the Ama, all sorts of self-seekers, crackpots, and politicians get in and pervert, or try to pervert, the whole organization. The Ahas are a two-edged sword."

"Would you do away with them, Doctor?" inquired Cyrus. Was it possible the Ahas represented the potential power to overthrow the healthfare state? No. Undoubtedly the medarchy was simply looking prudently at all eventualities...

"Abolish them? No. Because of the very nature of the medical profession and the services it does for Patients, there is—there has to be—a gulf between the two. A lay organization of enthusiastic young men and women who understand what the Ama is and what it does, can be a very useful bridge across this gulf. I just don't want Judy to be too sadly disillusioned if she ever finds that all the Ahas are not as earnest as herself, that's all."

"Drink up," said Mallup. "I'm going after another bottle. What about getting some sleep, Judy?"

She stamped her foot. "I'm not tired!"

"Run along, Judy," said Tree—"that's a well-adjusted girl." He smiled gently at her rebellious back. "Poor child—so full of faith."

"Isn't that what you want?" asked Mallup, returning.

DR. TREE frowned. "Want? It's necessary, but the two aren't always identical. I hope it will not be too great a blow to her if the Church of the Caduceus should be dissolved."

"Why should it be dissolved?" asked Cyrus. "I'd think it would serve exactly the purpose you were ascribing to the Ah—to the Health Auxiliaries."

"That's the argument for it," said Tree. "Against it is its mysticism. Oh, I know the supernatural elements are reduced almost to the vanishing point, but there's an irreducible minimum left. And that may be dangerous. Man has had too many gods that failed."

"Hell," said Mallup, "you use hocus-pocus and ritual and protocol in your office every day. What's wrong with doing it extra fancy once a week?"

"There's a difference between a doctor impressing a Patient with the seriousness of his work and erecting a theological system. The doctor dies or retires, and his place is taken by a younger, better trained man. The Caduceans' abstract Great Physician is immortal and unchanging. Such a concept may well lead to illusion. And illusion—any kind of illusion—is a symptom of maladjustment."

MALLUP drank. "Here we go again. When you adjust

the rabbit to the tiger, does the rabbit get ferocious? No, sir—the tiger gets a meal.”

“Not at all,” replied Tree. “If the rabbit is well adjusted, he runs away.”

“And if the tiger is adjusted, I suppose he runs after him.” Cyrus told himself to shut up at this point. Quickly. “But there’s a paradox or a non sequitur or something involved.” Was the whiskey, which he had been sipping so cautiously, affecting him?

“Go on, Mr. Tarn,” urged Tree.

“Well, then, if adjustment isn’t an abstraction, the rabbit and the tiger have to be adjusted to something. To each other, or to their environment—it doesn’t matter. In either case, they both can’t win—either the rabbit is eaten, and that shows he’s not well adjusted, or he isn’t, and that proves the tiger’s not well adjusted.”

“Chop-logic and false analogy,” said Tree, smiling. “No society is composed of rabbits and tigers. Anyway, it isn’t a case of winning—it’s a case of surviving to the best advantage. Only an idiot would wear

shorts and sandals in Antarctica.”

“I dunno,” commented Mallup. “The really adjustable type might grow fur.”

Tree dismissed the frivolity. “We all have to adjust—we all do adjust—one way or another, in greater or lesser degree. Some mallies would be maladjusted only in this society—some who fit in perfectly here and now would be unable to find a place among the Tauregs of the Sahara. Your rabbit in a tigers’ lair, or your tiger on an island devoid of prey, would be misfits. Beyond this, many misfits tend to be misfits in any time or place.”

“A mallie is a mallie because he’s a mallie,” Cyrus murmured.

TREE DID not seem to hear. “We all have to adjust,” he repeated. “Parents to their children, the child to his parents. We adjust to adolescence, maturity, age. Some men have adjusted to celibacy, others to marriage.”

Mallup cackled. “You’ve adjusted that way as often as any.”

"Five times." Dr. Tree finished his drink, reached for the bottle with a coordination which seemed a little slower than before. "Five times; I might try it again before I'm senile. Or after. The idea is to make your peace with the mores of your society. Conform as a price for security alias respectability. Conform. Conformity has been maligned—what's wrong with it? We're bipeds—we'd hate unipeds and tripeds with equal ferocity, and we'd be right. No place for them.

"Conformity's a law of life. A necessity. The individual belongs to the group, not the group to the individual. Individuality was overrated before the medarchy—'be different' 'express your personality' 'stand on your own feet'. Nonsense. All men are created unequal, but they can all *become* alike. Psycho-pharmacology—and electro-tranquilization if necessary—makes it take a little longer. A generation, or even two—by then the mallies will have died out. The children will be adjusted because we'll see to it. Only the other day the sub-

cutes uncovered a mallie school—it must be a couple of years since they did that before. Fewer and fewer as we get more efficient. Naturally there's going to be some suffering in the meantime—suffering the mallies bring on themselves—but we want as little as possible."

MALLUP said, "Reminds me about Grace; I hear she's a bigshot now."

"'Man by suffering shall learn,'" quoted Cyrus. It was stupid and pointless—it wasn't even relevant—and could bring swift disaster. If he felt a compulsive need for bravado, he ought to be satisfied with endangering himself alone, not expose Victoria and Hank.

"Thank God there's no apostolic succession—the Personal Physician's physician remains only a good doctor with great but not different responsibility. And Grace is a good doctor, make no mistake about it. She not only keeps Higginson in top shape, but she's devised this technique of giving him checkups at irregular and unannounced intervals, so as not to excite or depress the public."

He reached over and replenished his drink. "On the other hand. . . Oh, never mind. 'Man by suffering shall learn,'? Do you think so? Man brings suffering on himself. He insists on it, cherishes it, refuses to be parted from it. And the only thing he learns is that suffering never gets him anything but suffering. We've given people the utopia so long dreamed-of: health, happiness, security, freedom from war. Some of them still aren't satisfied. The ones who would never be satisfied."

"Divine discontent?"

"Refusal to accept reality. I've seen too much suffering to have faith in its therapeutic value—too much discontent to believe it leads to serenity. If it's man's fate to be discontented, that's not divine—just stupid."

"Don't hold with getting stirred up about things, myself," commented Mallup. "But if the mallies won't adjust to the Ama, let the Ama adjust to the mallies."

SURPRISINGLY to Cyrus, Dr. Tree nodded. "There's

a few in the Ama who seem to agree with that point of view. Whitelands of the *Medical Journal* is one of them. But it's impossible to act as though maladjustment were the sole business of the affected person. You can't afford to let the sentimentalist keep his deformed child, or grieve excessively over his poor old mother who ought to have been euthanized years ago, or worry himself into a breakdown over the possibility of being cuckolded—because every one of these 'private' concerns touches the general welfare somewhere. Suffering, discontent, maladjustment, can be spread as surely as typhoid or smallpox. And carriers must be isolated and cured. Or at least have his malady arrested. It's the only ultimately humane course." He looked straight at Cyrus, his eyes suddenly stern and sober.

It was not quite a warning, still less a threat. Yet, even as he felt the chill of the admonition, his mind was busy with what Tree had said about Horace Whitelands. It would be well to let whoever came for them know that Whitelands

was already considered too liberal by the Ama. Suspicion of the editor of the *Medical Journal* might lead to exposure of the fact that he was even more liberal than they thought. That he was, indeed, in loose contact with the mallie underground.

IV

DR. RAPHAEL TREE arose. "Well," he said easily, "it's been a pleasant evening."

Mallup yawned. "Tired myself. Had a rough day."

"Too many trips back and forth to the still," diagnosed Tree. "I suppose I mustn't complain—I recognize your courtesy in keeping it off Galentry. Although I'm not too enthusiastic about the holes you've cut in my damnably expensive fence."

"Sorry," apologized Mallup, not at all contritely. "I'll fix them one of these days."

Tree moved toward the door. "It will never be the same. Incidentally, you ought to change your trail again—visitors are likely to mistake it for the main entrance."

"That bad?" asked Mallup. "All right—I'll change it."

"You see how adjustment works? Chris keeps his still, but not on my property. I adjust by drinking the whiskey and not being inquisitive about working time. Good night."

"Good night, Doctor," replied Cyrus. Mallup grunted. The door closed.

"Your room's next to Carrie's," said Mallup.

"I know. Do you mind telling me something?"

"Depends on what it is."

"Isn't it risky to moonshine? Even though Dr. Tree seems strangely tolerant?"

"Nothing strange about it—he likes liquor and he's got a thrifty streak in him, though it hardly shows. Danger? It's not even neurosis. If some nosey character stumbled on it, they'd send me to a psychiatrist who'd probably prescribe occupational therapy in a brewery. Night."

"Good night," said Cyrus.

THE HALLWAY was dark. He felt his way gingerly toward the stairs, hoping the lack of light wouldn't make it too

hard to find Victoria's room or cause him to stumble and wake Judy. When he got halfway up he saw with gratitude that the bathroom door was open, giving a small light.

"Cyrus! What kept you so long?"

He waited till they were inside before answering. "Dr. Tree came over for a drink of Mallup's whiskey. He's just left."

"I went downstairs after Hank fell asleep and heard voices. I was nervous."

"I'm sorry," he said contritely. "I couldn't get away. Tree came in so quickly, I was trapped. Is Hank all right?"

"He's asleep. Finally. For a long time he tossed and cried out. Pleading with the doctors, telling them he'd had a check-up—not to give him shots."

This was what Tree had called being humane, what Mallup had shrugged off. "It won't take him too long to forget it all," he said with a confidence largely synthetic, "once we're free."

"Help me," she begged simply, quietly. "I'm afraid."

With his arms around her, he

searched for some reassuring formula, some convincing set of words to ease her. Tree was no brute, no monster—his relations with Mallup and Judy revealed him as kindly, even gentle. And it was exactly this which made his fixity of purpose so ominous. "Don't," he said. "Don't be afraid. It's only a matter of hours now."

"Do you really think so?" she whispered. "Do you really believe it yourself?"

"Of course I do." Tiredness and tension combined to make him yawn audibly.

She pulled away from him slightly, spoke briskly. "You need sleep as much as Hank, and I'm keeping you up."

"I'm not tired any more." But he was...

HOW LONG he slept, or what wakened him, he had no idea. All his senses were alert as he sat up, straining his ears in alarm. Moonlight brightened the room. Victoria's face was utterly composed on the pillow.

He slid out of bed, reaching for his clothes. "Quick," he whispered. "Something's wrong."

He could not define what it was, or how he knew. No sound broke the quiet. Had someone entered the next room? Had Mallup come upstairs? Or was it something more immediately perilous?

She too came awake instantly, not wasting time to ask, "What's the matter; what is it?" As he struggled into his trousers, she dressed quietly, then woke the boy efficiently, neither startling him nor allowing him to cry out.

The door opened quietly; there were at least three of them in the hall behind the man in the doorway who was holding them in the glare of his flashlight. "There's no good in moving—we're prepared to use gas if we have to. Come with us."

"Are you orderlies?" Victoria asked in a clear, strong voice as she shoved Cyrus toward the window with her elbow. Her intention was clear. Resistance was hopeless; unburdened by a child and a handicapped girl, Cyrus had a bare chance to get away. To try and effect a total escape meant that everything would be

lost. He could not spirit her or the boy from the room; there was only the faintest possibility for himself. Yet...

"Stop!"

HE REACHED out with a speed and strength he had not thought himself capable of, seized Hank under one arm, Victoria by the wrist, whirled them toward the window. He sprang to the dresser, crouched on the sill, and bracing himself, gave a tremendous heave with both feet which sent the cumbersome bureau crashing forward at the intruders. With sudden elation he noted that she had not hesitated, but in that sped second had lowered Hank out of the window and begun to climb through herself. He spun around, grasping her hands, leaned far out, letting her drop just as he felt hard, relentless fingers digging into his shoulder.

"Got him! Get the girl and the kid. Outside!"

Could there be really only two of them in the room? He jerked his elbow hard back, striking out with bare heel at the same time. The grasp loos-

ened slightly, ever so slightly, but enough to give him the chance to twist, duck, and find himself breathlessly, unbelievably free.

The crack of the revolver and the soft spang of the bullet in the wood over his head came simultaneously as he threw himself outward. It was a long—a sickeningly far too long—drop to the ground. His arms somehow did not receive the shock properly; his first feeling was one of chagrined amazement that he had so miscalculated the jump. And Vic-

toria, Hank? If she landed on her bad ankle... Then he realized the impact had been on his knee. His right knee, in which the sensation of great pain was rapidly overcoming the momentary numbness.

"Cyrus!"

He put his palms flat, tried to raise his body, and almost collapsed. Knee—sprained or broken? Either was disastrous. But... He tried to be sure of the direction of her whispered voice. He had to know; separation now would be separation forever.

[to be continued]

Cyrus, Victoria, and Henry are trapped — but who set the trap? Did Mallup betray them? Or was it Judy, Dr. Tree, Alex — or some totally unknown traitor in the Mallie underground? You cannot afford to miss the second suspenseful installment of "Caduceus Wild", which will appear in the February 1959 issue of *Science Fiction Stories*. Reserve your copy now at your local newsstand; it goes on sale December first.

PERFECT MARRIAGE

by George
H. Smith

Dr. Arthur seemed to welcome problem cases — and Joe Faber, the millionaire playboy who'd already beaten Tommy Manville's record, was certainly a problem case — if there ever was one!

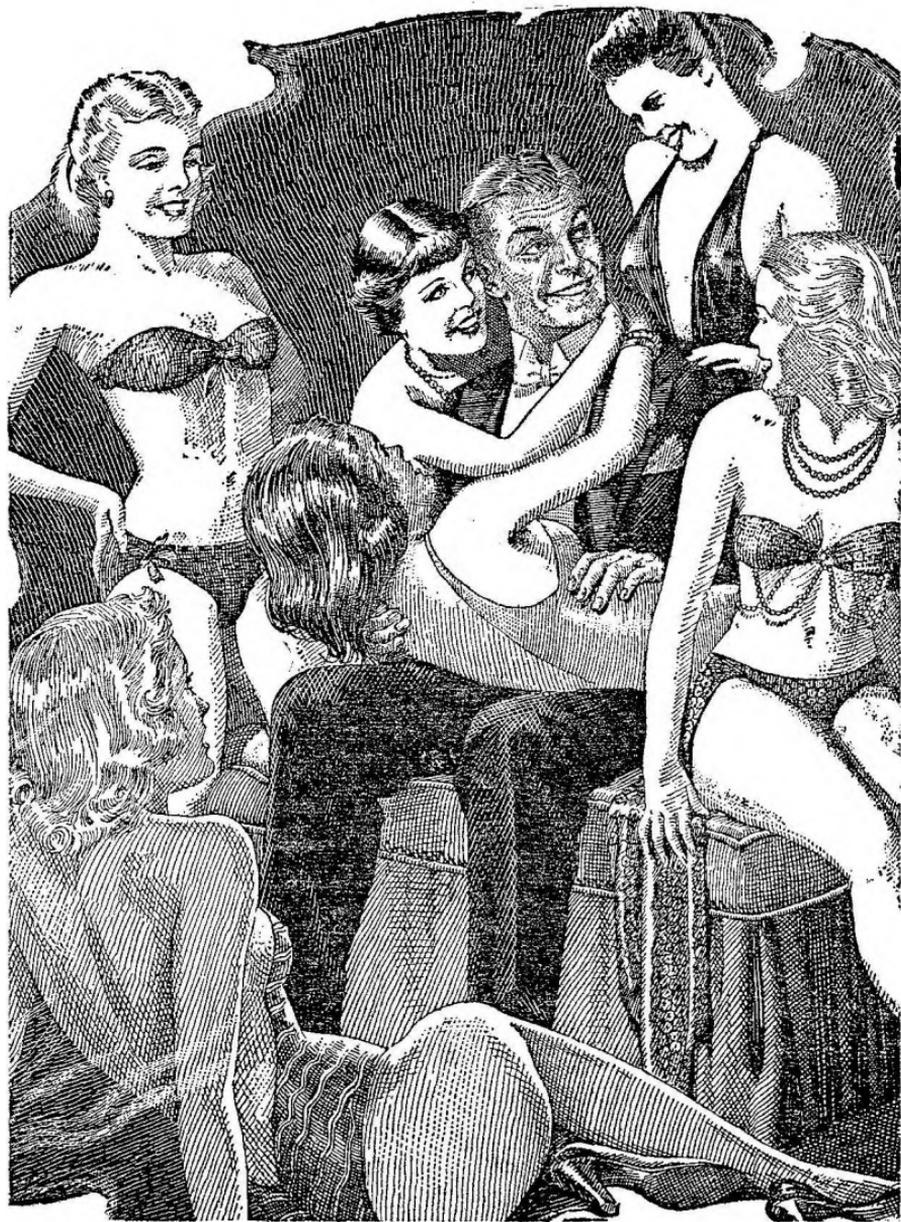
THE TALL, dark-haired man had the profile of a 3-D idol. "Is this the place where they guarantee marriages?" he asked.

The welcoming smile on the face of the willowy blonde receptionist-secretary deepened. "Yes, it is, sir. Come right in."

The man returned the smile as he looked her over carefully. "Well," he observed, "if all the girls this outfit gets are as satisfactory as you, I'm sure that only perfect marriages can result."

Under his frank appraisal the girl blushed. He certainly wasn't the timid type, like so many who came to the clinic. In fact, he turned from her to admire himself in the big mirror which hung on the wall to the right of her desk. Relieved to have his eyes off her, she said primly, "I'm sure you'll find our marriage partners more than satisfactory, sir. Now, if you'll just give me your name, I'm sure that Dr. Arthur will see you in a few minutes."

He turned from the mirror and made himself comfortable



Carol thought that finding a woman to whom Joe Faber could stay married would be too much even for Dr. Arthur's setup...

in a chair before he said casually, "I'm Joe Faber."

Carol Jonson the receptionist blinked and stared. She almost dropped her auto-pen as she asked, "Joe Faber? Not *the* Joe Faber?"

"Right," the grin faded from his face as he continued, "The playboy who broke the record for broken marriages set by Tommy Manville back in the 20th Century. Not that I was trying to, mind you. It's just that I can't seem to find a wife I can get along with for any length of time."

"Well...well, I..." Carol faltered, at a loss for words. She finally lifted her wrist and spoke into the office intercom strapped around it. "Dr. Arthur, will you come out here, please?"

A FEW MOMENTS later, the door to the inner office opened and a roly-poly man in his late fifties, sporting little Van Dyke beard, appeared. "Yes, Miss Jonson, what is it?"

"Well...sir...we have what may be a rather difficult case here, sir, and I thought..."

"Nonsense, Miss Jonson, I'm surprised at you. For the Ar-

thur Marriage Clinic there are no difficult cases. You know that all of our cases are 100% successes."

"But Dr. Arthur, this is *Joe Faber*. I'm sure you've seen him on TV and read about him in *Newsfax* tapes. He's been married sixteen times and it has never lasted more than a month. He's...I mean...well..." she avoided Joe's eyes and tried to lower her voice so only the doctor could hear, "...he's supposed to be impossible to live with."

Joe Faber heard and grinned again. "Are you afraid to take me? Are you afraid that your perfect record will be ruined?"

"Not at all, Mr. Faber, not at all," Dr. Arthur said gently, rocking back and forth on his heels. "As a matter of fact, it's the problem cases—is you'll excuse the expression—like yours that have built up our reputation. Miss Jonson hasn't been with us long enough to realize that we particularly welcome people with unusual problems."

"Fine. Let's get on with it then," Faber said taking out a checkbook. "How much will it be?"

"Five thousand in advance

and ten thousand after one one year of happy marriage."

"Okay, you got yourself a deal," Faber agreed scribbling the check.

"Miss Jonson, please help Mr. Faber out of his coat," the doctor said crisply. "And show him to the Emotional Diagnostic machine."

CAROL HAD been with Dr. Arthur for only a week, and she watched with intent interest as Joe Faber entered the large black box that looked like a telephone booth at the rear of the inner office.

"This, sir," the doctor said as he made adjustments on the control panel of the box, "is a little device I invented myself and it is the secret of our success." He paused long enough to allow the other man to light a cigaret. "When I set the machine in operation, your every emotional need and desire will be recorded, and from the pattern established we will pick a perfect mate for you."

"I hope it works," Joe Faber said as he closed the door. "You have no idea how much alimony payments to sixteen women amount to."

"It will...it will," the doctor assured him, pressing the button that set the machine in operation.

A few minutes later, when Dr. Arthur let him out of the machine, Joe Faber asked, "When do I meet her, this perfect wife of mine? Do I come back here to pick her up?"

"Oh no, that's not necessary. She'll come to you. You make proper preparations for the ceremony, and three days from now she'll come out to your place and you can be married." Dr. Arthur led him toward the door as he patted him on the back. "All you have to do is come back after the stated interval, tell us how perfect your marriage is, and pay us the ten thousand."

ONE YEAR later, when Faber returned, Carol Jonson was taking dictation. She had been dreading his return, because she was sure he would want his money back. Instead he tossed a check onto the doctor's desk.

"There it is, Doc, and Linda's worth every cent of it. I don't understand how you do it but it's wonderful. I've never

been so happy in my whole life. And this time it's *for* life!" the beaming playboy said.

He went out whistling happily, pausing only long enough to admire his profile in the mirror. The doctor smiled at Carol as he placed the check in his wallet.

"Well! I never expected to see that one satisfied with any one woman," Carol admitted.

"Ah, but Miss Jonson, you forget that young Mr. Faber is exactly the kind of patient we specialize in."

"I'm afraid I don't understand, Dr. Arthur."

"Let's see, you've been with us for over a year now, haven't you? You've proved very satisfactory, and I think that we can trust you with the real secret of the Arthur Marriage Clinic."

"The real secret?"

"Yes, Miss Jonson. Haven't you noticed that the people we turn away are the most normal ones, and that the ones we accept as clients are similar to Joe Faber?"

"Well...yes. And I have wondered about it."

"The reason, my dear," the doctor explained looking appreciatively at her crossed legs, "is that our little black box isn't exactly what we pretend it is. We call it an Emotional Diagnostic Machine but really it would be better named a Projected Force Image Integrator."

"A what?"

"A Projected Force Image Integrator. A machine that copies the personality of any given human being and then creates a projected force image of that person. In short, my dear, Joe Faber is married to an electronic image of himself but with emphasis on the female sex traits."

"Oh my..." Carol Jonson gasped.

"And I have never," Dr. Arthur continued, "Seen a more fully developed case of the Narcissus complex than Joe Faber's. That young man will be happy for the rest of his life."





the cyclops gun

by Stanley H.
Siegel

It was the perfect weapon, and it had killed the man who designed it, when he tried to dismantle the gun. Now it stood alone, triumphant, and deadly to anyone who came too close, or who tried to destroy it...

SAM ADAMS muttered to himself. "It looks like this is going to be the year of the Hero. The Chinese always give the year a name. The Year of the Rooster—the Year of the Ostrich—the Year of the rotten banana peel! This year we can call the Year of the R a d i o a c t i v e Hero. Name of Sam."

Sam roused up from this internal conversation with a start. The jeep in which he was riding with his wife came to a rather sudden stop.

It was in a town called Pernicz about twenty miles south of Sofia, which had been only recently the capital of Bulgaria. Sam and Myra entered an old, dirty red brick building on a Belgian block plaza with no sidewalks. The lobby of the building was a big bare room with a cracked grey terrazzo floor, and faded portraits of old soldiers and dignitaries hung on yellow plaster walls. It was the Town Hall.

The mayor showed them all the municipal treasures of Pernicz. He paused in front of a glass case hung on one wall and pointed with his pipe. The

glass was thin and old and wrinkled like cellophane.

"You see, here," said the Mayor, in heavily-accented English, "a document which attests to the fact that in the year 1247—twelve hundred and forty-seven, mind you—the Bishop of Sofia bestowed a charter upon our ancestors for the establishment of the municipality of Pernicz." The major coughed with pride. The brown parchment looked ready to crumble.

Under a high narrow window stood a worm-holed brown wooden chair, square-carved and dusty, its seat covered with a faded piece of red velvet plush. A length of velvet-covered rope hung from arm to arm. The sun shone into the dimly lighted room and you could see the dust lay heavily on the potted plants on the window sill.

ON THE WALL over the door, there was a curious instrument and Adams pointed it out to his wife. The little man noticed their glance at the wall, looked at them and smiled eagerly.

"Un arbaiest," he said, nod-

ding and smiling. "Arcus ballista. A great treasure of Pernicz. Comprenez-vous? Do you understand?"

"Oh yes," said Sam to Myra, "French and Latin with a Balkan accent. A machine of war. A crossbow." The mayor nodded affirmatively. Sam returned the nod and smiled. "What won't they think of next?"

"It was with this crossbow, as you correctly call it, sir, that Ringach killed the Monster in the year 1473," said the mayor. "It's so beautifully carved and inlaid with ivory. Notice..."

"Very cute," said Sam, dismally.

"Sam, don't be a tourist," said Myra. "He's doing his best." She smiled at the mayor. "Beautiful," she said. "Beautiful!"

She hissed under her breath. "What's eating you, Sam?"

"Let's get out of here!" he replied.

They took leave of the Mayor on the steps of the Town Hall. He was bowing in the bright sunlight as the wind blew dust and trash along the cobblestones. They drove the

jeep through the dirty shaded streets to the end of town.

"Sam, what is it? I got your letter and I was frightened. Why are you here? Who sent you? What about the University?"

"Now, hold on, Myra," Sam said through compressed lips, "and I'll tell all. Dammit, I was sure I didn't say anything in that letter."

"That's just it," said Myra, quickly. "You didn't say anything, so I got here as fast as I could."

"Look, Myra, I..." Sam stopped and sat silent for a moment. "All right, I'll tell you. Let's start back at the beginning."

SAM ADAMS sat hunched over the wheel as he drove and talked.

"In those days," he began, "the cold war was on and raging. We were armed to the teeth and scared stiff, for good reason, that the Russians would strike first and they, no doubt, were scared of us. They just couldn't or wouldn't comprehend that our democratic philosophy would forbid our attacking them first. They ac-

cused us of planning a third World War. They judged us by themselves. You know, they were ruthless.

"They had just put up the Sputnik and a second one right after with a dog in it, and, aside from it being a tremendous sock in the jaw propaganda-wise, it meant that they had a good long-range missile to the bargain. Anyway, they kept accusing us of preparing for war. Maybe they believed it and maybe they didn't. But they convinced too many people around the world that it was the truth.

"They used every trick in the book. As far back as 1956, they approached the NATO powers with a proposal to put all of our air and ground forces out of Europe. A big, fair and square, one-for-you-and-one-for-me, buffer zone. They would return within their own borders. It sounded good, but the boys in Washington and London and Paris knew it was a trick. Satellite powers would be controlled by Moscow anyway. Neutral or weak countries could be easily subverted by Kremlin hoods. The most sacredly solemn treaties didn't

mean beans. They could work all night for Moscow and when the advantage they worked up was big enough, they would drop the big ones on us and it would be all over fast."

"Sam," Myra interrupted, "do you realize that you used those exact words at the dean's party when we met? Do you remember that heated argument you had with...?"

SAM DIDN'T even notice what she had said. "All right, I was at the University under Professor Rogossin then and we talked about it all the time. He was no politician, but that kind of buffer zone in Europe was unthinkable to him. This was no answer and Professor Rogossin knew it.

"I was just a kid then. He was a big man, a world famous physicist and engineer. I looked him up in 'American Men of Science' one day when I was doing some work in the library. He took up almost half the page. You know the way they write it up:

ROGOSSIN, Argid B (IR)
'18; B.S., N.Y.U. '36; M.A.,
Sorbonne '37; PhD D.S.C.,

M.I.T. '40; Hon D.S.C., Ox-
ford '41; Hon PhD, Chicago
'42...

and then a list of papers he presented at a million and one seminars, meetings of big-brain societies, papers and acoustics, microwaves, antennas, electronics, glow discharge oscillators, mathematical physics, the Rogossin electronic organ wave-guide lens antenna; artificial microwave dielectrics, servomechanisms—it was fantastic!

"I was up in his office that week and he was storming up and down in front of a blackboard that covered one wall..."

SAM ADAMS kept on talking, virtually living the scene over again, and Myra could visualize it. Rogossin there in that room with her husband.

"They're nuts!" Rogossin yelled. "Absolutely, stark raving nuts! Do you know that one of those idiots in Washington wants us to *consider* that buffer zone? It's ridiculous!"

He whirled and pulled down a map that rolled like a win-

dow shade above the blackboard—a map of Europe as it stood in 1949. He stabbed viciously at the map with a blunt forefinger, as he held a newspaper up in one hand. “Listen to me! They want us to pull out of western Europe and leave this heartland to the Russian bear. Should we leave Europe so the mines and factories and people can be used against us? Look at this! The Rapacki plan! The plan of the Polish foreign minister, Adam Rapacki. He wants a zone in Central Europe free of nuclear weapons, embracing Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Very smart. The Russians love it. Sam,” his voice suddenly lowered and he asked in mock innocence, “can missiles fly over nuclear free zones?”

“No, my friend! I have a better answer than their fake buffer zone. Here! Here! And here!” He drew a line with his fingernail. “Danzig! Trieste! Istanbul! Then we draw a line across Asia and one sweep across the Arctic and we’ve got it. This,” he shouted, “will be a real buffer zone. Not of politics and bluff and secret police, but one of *steel*. One the

Russians cannot cross. Not with infantry, rockets, surprise ballistic missiles, or even sputniks.”

Then he calmed down. “What we need is a fire-break in the deep woods which are now very dry,” he said softly. “Separating East and West. Like the Dead Sea, a dead strip where no one will live or graze cattle—a barren ground across which not even one man can walk.”

“Look!” He came and crouched over Adams, as if he could pound his intelligence into Sam’s brain. “An automatic gun! Self-contained, self-aiming and loading. A limited range to be defined by treaty, able to fire to full 90° elevation and to rotate 360° in azimuth. Nothing passes. A complete, absolute and everlasting barrier to human and machine alike.”

ROGOSSIN went to the U. N. (Sam continued.) The Russians accepted, though no one could figure out why—perhaps they thought it wouldn’t work. Perhaps they thought they could go on de-

veloping technologically, beat the gun, and spring a load of fission on us. Maybe they really were scared of us, strange as that may seem. But history says they accepted.

So Rogossin built his gun. It was made to fire at any moving object. The sighting device was contained in a tube terminating in a bulb above and parallel with the firing tube. It was a single, huge, green bulbous eye. It was weird, but it was the most amazing gun-sight ever devised. It was sensitive to both visible and infrared light and emitted a radar signal that remained a secret when Rogossin died and remains one to this very day. When the sight perceived any movement at all, azimuth and elevation gyros started instantaneously. Signals recording air temperature and barometric pressure, wind velocity, were simultaneously fed into a big black box deep in the ground beneath the gun. A generator fed power to the gun motors and the gun was ready to fire.

It was a tour de force. But the projectile itself was *the* masterpiece. Its flight was authorized and instantaneously

initiated by the gun, but it was an alpha-particle rocket, and it flew faster than anything on the face of the earth. It was armed with an atomic war-head that expended with greater and greater energy the further it exploded from the gun. Thus it could not emit too big a blast too closely and destroy the gun.

Rogossin placed fourteen of those guns, from Danzig to the heart of Bulgaria before the project was abandoned. . . .

SAM ADAMS paused to accept the lighted cigaret that Myra passed him. "You know why it was abandoned," he said. "Revolts broke the heart of the Soviet empire, and the threat of missile war was over. The mighty Union of Soviet Socialist Republics disappeared in civil war, and reformed into little, Balkan-type countries. Now we've got kings, presidents, bandit-queens and oriental-type despots. The works. And endless small wars, breaking through the borders. But they have no atomic potential, so we mediate their wars by U. N. committees. We removed their

atomic stockpiles right after the revolt and now we're trying to settle down to peace and progress." Sam smiled sardonically.

"Now begins the slow fight of man to improve himself spiritually, if possible. Naturally, the 'J' guns were a menace and had to be removed. All barriers between nations, between man and his brother stand in the way of progress and enlightenment and have to come down. Do I bore you, Myra?"

"Sam Adams, you fool! Please continue!"

"O. K. So Rogossin was called in again by the UN and went to Europe. He removed thirteen of the guns—and the fourteenth gun killed him. When he died, he took the key with him. The last gun is now free and uncontrollable. No one can approach it. It can fire at a shell coming to destroy it, then instantaneously fire another that follows back the trajectory of the first one to hit the opposing battery. You remember, it fires an atomic projectile. No amount of shells fired 'time on target' can fool it. Six American 155 mm how-

itzers fired not two weeks ago T. O. T. on the gun. The gun fired six times, destroying every shell in the air, in the air, mind you, and fired six more times. Every gun that fired was almost in the same instant obliterated by a nuclear blast. Do you know how many American boys were killed in that fiasco?" Sam demanded bitterly. "I warned those fool officials when they came to see me at the University."

"It sounds as if you have a Frankenstein monster," said Myra.

SAM NODDED. "That's just what it is. And what's more, the gun is virtually unbeatable. It's a menace to every plane that flies in the air and to any man that walks on the earth into its firing radius. It has shot down every satellite we put up. It is sending up too much radio-active dust with every discharge. It's an abomination on the face of the earth.

"So now you know. That's why I'm here. The gun killed Rogossin when he came to destroy it and nobody in the whole wide living world knows

its secret. Certainly, not me!

"In desperation, Schmerz and Frankel and that other fellow from the U. N. came. They knew I studied under Rogossin and asked me if I would come. They begged me. So here I am."

"Sam, what do they expect? What can you do?"

"Nothing, Myra. Absolutely nothing. I came because I didn't have the guts to refuse. There isn't a single solitary thing to do except to try to keep everything clear of it and to wait until its power runs down—which will be never—or until its projectiles are used up, which will be almost never."

THE NEXT morning Sam left Myra sleeping fitfully in the little hotel in Pernicz and toiled the jeep over the winding roads, bordered by ditches and hedgerows. He was deep in thought and worry. He frowned and muttered, "D-day and Normandy all over again!" Finally, he came to a point where he saw the road did not lie under the shadow of trees but seemed to grow lighter as a road does when it

approaches an open body of water.

It was not water that Adams came to, but the edge of a clearing. It was the edge of the zone of the Gun.

Sam parked the jeep, took out a small wooden chest. He opened the chest and removed a telescope and a tripod. He lay on his stomach behind a pile of rubble. The Gun was on a hill four miles away. He looked at the gun through the telescope. It stood there, at rest for the moment, hideous, black, invulnerable, eternal. A gigantic, electronic trap.

Suddenly, as he watched it, the gun seemed to move. It moved rapidly. It seemed to be watching something. Suddenly, there was a flash at the muzzle, and then a smashing sound like a five inch gun going off, and then, a quick hiss. Far off to the left there was a gigantic sunburst. Sam dropped the telescope, clutching his eyes. He felt as if he had been punched in the eyes. The explosion must have been twenty miles away.

Two minutes later there was a noise like rolling thunder. It was an airburst. A plane. The

airlines had been warned. All air maps were printed now with a red circle around the dangerous area, but planes still got lost. Navigators made errors. This was the result!

THE GENERAL came to see Sam Adams in the Hotel Pernicz. He looked at Sam for a long time. Then he spoke.

"Why can't we tunnel to the gun and explode it?" he asked. "Surely, there. . ."

"Because, you know, all 'J' guns were mined against tunnelling up to three miles around with hundreds of atomic mines. Rogossin knew the gun would have a soft underbelly, so he protected it with mines in a complete hemisphere under the ground. You couldn't get near it if you dug straight up under it from ten miles down."

"Why cannot we send swarms of missiles against it and destroy it?"

Sam was disgusted at the obvious question.

"Because it would swat every one of them down before they got within fifteen miles and fire its own projectile

along the original flight path. It would fire at a rifle bullet."

"Well, but the range, Mr. Adams, the range. Surely the projectile of that gun could not have the range of one of our Eagle missiles, for instance."

"That's true. Maybe it couldn't reach the site of the original firing, but the missile couldn't get near it. That gun's projectile would travel a good way before it ran out of fuel and then it would blow up Budapest or Prague or someplace."

"What about mortars, Adams? Why not dig a trench and lob mortar shells at it while themselves protected from the direct line of fire?"

"Those projectiles will follow back any trajectory, and I mean *any*. One would come back so fast that the mortar crew wouldn't have a chance."

THE GENERAL'S military adviser blurted, "Divert a river. Drown it out! That's it! Drown it out!"

"Where, sir," asked Sam Adams with utter scorn, "are you going to get a river?"

"Dammit, Adams," yelled

the general. "*Find* a way. Find a way to destroy that damned monster. You knew Rogossin. You know more about that gun than anyone else. There must be a way to destroy that gun!"

The general glowered at Sam.

"You're a great help," said Adams under his breath.

THE FOLLOWING day, the gun fired again. A gypsy van cut off the road where the barbed wire had rusted down. There was a hideous blast. The next morning, there was still a fire in the woods and police saw wagon wheel tracks leading off the road and a fire and in the middle of the fire, a tremendous black pit. The police dared not go any further because of radioactivity, so they let the fire burn out, repaired the barbed wire along the road and put up a huge sign which said in Slavish or Rumanian or something: "*Attention! THE GUN!*"

SAM ADAMS came down to the zone and stared into the pit for a long time.

Night came. He lay on his back beside the telescope and pounded a flat stone with his hand. The pressure was beginning to break him. Finally, he fell asleep.

He awoke at dawn, cold and wet from the dew, and in pain to the marrow of his bones. He stretched, took off his glasses, rubbed his eyes and his unshaven jaw. Then he put on his glasses and again peered through the telescope.

The gun was only slightly visible in the early morning darkness. But Adams knew that it never slept. Some birds started in the trees above Sam's head and began to cheep. They woke even before there was light on the horizon. Now, in the growing light, Sam looked for them idly.

They chirped and fluttered there at the edge of the zone, on the edge of oblivion.

Suddenly a pair of them launched themselves out of the trees and, whirling and darting, they flew toward the gun. They flew high into the early morning sky, bright blue with incredible pink cirrus clouds, until they were almost invis-

ble and then swooped far out over the barren ground directly toward the gun until they were out of sight. Sam cringed, but there was deep silence; the gun didn't fire.

"Of course," Sam muttered furiously to himself. "This must have happened ever since the gun was installed. Of course, Rogossin wouldn't have set the gun to fire at every passing bird or insect. That was obvious."

Was the gun so made that it would not fire at something as small as birds? No. The gun had fired at snipers' bullets that were no larger than bumblebees and then destroyed the snipers. Was it that birds were not metal, and therefore...no, of course not. A man inching his way into the zone was fired upon. The body of a man or the rapid flight of a bullet caused the gun to fire. It did not fire on birds, but it fired at a man. It did not fire upon birds, but it fired on bullets.

Sam's heart leaped into his throat. *It must be*, he thought. Smaller than a man, and less swift in flight than a bullet—but still able to destroy the gun or disable it!

SUDDENLY, Sam Adams was charged with nervous energy until he trembled. He jumped into the jeep, started it up and stalled it. He finally got it going and slammed into Pernicz like a madman. The jeep never touched the bottom of a pot-hole until it screeched to a stop in front of the Town Hall. It was deserted.

He tore up the stairs of the brown building and flung himself through the doors. He grabbed the red velvet chair and jammed it against the wall and climbed up and grabbed the crossbow and its winder and its one flethed historic bolt from the yellow plaster wall. Then, turning, he ran to the jeep, jumped in with his prize and raced back to the zone as fast as the jeep could fly.

He dropped down beside the telescope, panting and sobbing. He brushed his hair back and took off his glasses and wiped them on his shirt. Then he turned over and lay on his back.

"Now, Sam," he whispered, "calm yourself. Don't do anything stupid. This could be very embarrassing."

He got up on his elbows and

looked into the zone. It was formerly forest that was cleared years ago by bulldozers to give the gun a clear field of fire. But the ground was not table flat. It *could* be done!

SAM TOOK the crossbow in his hands and attached the winder to draw the bow. It had not been fired in almost five hundred years. Adams wound it slowly, exerting all its strength until the linen bow cord at last fell into the notch. He cast aside the winder and dropped the iron and wood bolt into its groove. It was an ancient and primitive weapon but it had a shoulder stock like a rifle.

Sam looked into the telescope at the gun. Then he traced a course that would conceal him and lead him to the gun.

He flattened out like a flat worm as he entered the zone from the shadow of the woods. He took advantage of every slight depression in the earth. He took shelter behind the smallest rock. His cheek pressed tightly against the ground as he inched his way almost four miles to the crest

of the low hill upon which the gun stood.

Finally, he reached the concrete apron that spread out around the gun. No man alive could cross that apron. The bow would have to be fired from where he was. It was two hundred and fifty yards; he had one shot. It had to be figured, and he had to have a lot of luck.

Sam Adams raised his eyes above the concrete and slowly started to bring the crossbow to bear on the gun. There was a high frequency hum and the gun slowly turned until it pointed directly at Sam. He froze. The sweat ran into his eyes. The gun swung past him and then back again. He did not move; he was presenting too small a target to actuate the gun. The gun moved again. It was hunting him!

Sam's finger curled around the trigger of the crossbow. The gun was pointing at him, looking at him with a great green malevolent eye. Sam squeezed the trigger.

THERE WAS a snap and a hum. *Crash!* The cross-

bow's dart had hit the single green eye of the gun.

Sam looked at the gun for a long time. Then he backed slowly out of the zone on his belly and drove like wildfire to the American military mission that camped on the outskirts of Pernicz.

Far away in North Africa, at a SAC base nestled in the Atlas Mountains, a waiting bomber received the green flag from the tower and rolled over the runway slowly, gathering speed, until its Jato unit fired and set it hurtling into the air.

Sam lay on his back and saw contrails climbing the sky from the horizon. There was a flash of stainless steel as the bomber reflected the light of the mid-morning sun. No

sound. Couldn't even see it. It was too high.

There was an interminable wait. Suddenly the ground around the gun erupted in an enormous tower of flaming gas and dust and boiling energy. Explosions echoed deep in the earth as the mines detonated. The enormous thunderclap of sound rushed over the barren zone and beyond and stripped the leaves from the trees of the forest and tore them out by the roots.

Sam lay on the earth in the forest, covered with mud and torn leaves and twigs. The earth was sweet and warm and felt alive. This forest would grow again and spread and cover the barren ground of the zone. Men would plant there.

The gun was dead.

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St. Clair

**Earth may be safe from
invaders, after all. And
here's the reason why ...**

EARTH IS no longer so desirable. The many atomic explosions have coated it, like a rich sweet plum with a layer of lead arsenate insecticide on its skin, with a poisonous veneer of radio-active particles. But there was a time, not too long ago, when alien eyes were looking at earth's richness. And were covetous.

Anne Sebastian caught the Spanish influenza in November, when the number of cases in the Napa valley was at its peak. Will Sebastian could get the doctor out from Napa only one time to see her, and he couldn't find a nurse at all.

Anne was very sick. When she began to get better, her recovery was painful and slow. She used to lie in bed and weep from weakness and depression, knowing how foolish she was being, how good Will was to her, that things would surely be better, but obsessed by a haunting fear that they could only get much worse.

There was some objective reason, of course, for her emotion. In the world war that had just ended, some eight million

soldiers had been killed and nobody knew how many civilians; and the influenza epidemic, to date, had killed another twenty million of the world's population. It had been a true pandemic, with its mortality almost exclusively among the young and strong. Yes, 1918 had been a bad year.

On a more personal level, the lengthening shadow of National Prohibition—it was almost certain by now that the amendment would pass—might well make Anne anxious about her future and Will's, since he was a wine grower. They couldn't decide whether they should sell their acreage, or replant their vines with prunes, or stick it out and hope for better times. But Anne realized, without its doing her the slightest good, that to let these things make her feel that she had reached the end of everything, the jumping off place, the place where only disaster lay ahead, was ridiculous. That she *knew* it was ridiculous only increased her sense of black despair.

ONE DAY, early in January, Will came up to the

bedroom with Anne's lunch tray.

"Something bad has happened," she said as he opened the door.

"Damn," he said mildly. "...Dear, I wish you wouldn't do that."

"I can't help it," his wife answered. She tried to smile. "I've always been able to tell what people were thinking, and since I had the flu it's been much worse. I can't seem to shut my mind off, no matter how I try. ...What's gone wrong, though?"

"See if you can tell from my mind."

"Something about the vines. Phylloxera?"

"No, not the phylloxera." He set the tray down on her bedside table. "Honey, I'm afraid it's the Anaheim disease."

"Oh. Oh, my." Anne knew as well as he did what the Anaheim disease was. It had wiped out 30,000 acres of vines in Southern California in the 1880's, and caused a monetary loss of \$20,000,000. No one had ever known what caused it, or how to control it; it had seemed unstoppable. Abruptly and illogically it had stopped.

It had just stopped. But since nobody knew what had stopped it, there was no reason why it shouldn't start up again.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I dug up the vines—there were three—and burned them. All except a little piece, and I'm going to send that to the University. They might be able to suggest something. Or I may have caught it in time. . . . Eat your eggs, honey, before they get cold."

DUTIFULLY, Anne dipped a strip of toast in her soft-boiled eggs. Will kept telling her she ought to eat.

He sat down beside her on the bed. "I don't suppose it matters so much," he said, trying to be cheerful. "If prohibition goes through, I mean. But I hate to see my vines die."

"Yes. . . ." She finished her eggs. "Will, somebody's coming along the road. He's going past Garretson's place."

"Do you hear him? I don't hear anything."

"No, I see him." Anne's eyes were closed. "It's a medium-sized man. He'd been in a—a sort of wreck. In an auto. Not

exactly an auto, really, but like that. He's sick and dizzy. I wonder why he didn't stop at Garretson's for help. There's a big bump on his head."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. He'll be knocking at the door in a minute. You'd better go down, Will, and help him in."

Obediently her husband rose to go. When he was still at the head of the stair, there came a knock at the door.

LEFT ALONE, Anne felt her anxiety come down on her again. The onset was so abrupt that she felt as if a dark ceiling had come crashing about her head.

After a moment, she sat up in bed, took hold of the bed post, and got wobblingly to her feet. She hadn't been out of bed before, except for brief journeys to the bathroom. But she couldn't lie there in bed any longer, feeling like this; she'd dress herself, and go down and see who the visitor was.

WHEN ANNE came into the parlor, Will got quickly to his feet. "Anne, you

shouldn't have got out of bed," he said. "You're not well enough." He put his hand under her arm and guided her to the bulbous old-fashioned sofa.

"Oh, I'm all right," Anne answered. "I'm feeling better." During her descent of the stair, she had pinched her cheeks to make the color come to them. She didn't, she thought, look as sick as she might have. She glanced toward the Mission oak armchair where the guest, who had been lying back, was struggling into an upright position.

"Won't you sit down again, Mr. . . .?" she said.

"Anne, this is Mr. Kerr. He had an accident to his auto and hurt his head. I had him lie back in the chair, and we've both been having a little brandy.

"Mr. Kerr, this is Anne Sebastian, my wife. She's just getting over the influenza."

"How do you do, Mrs. Sebastian. I'm sorry to hear you've been ill," said Mr. Kerr. He had sunk back in the armchair. He was a smaller and slighter man than Anne had seen him, with gray hair and sharp black eyes. "Excuse my

sitting down. I still feel faint."

WILL BROUGHT Anne a glass of brandy and poured out more for himself and Mr. Kerr.

"Nice brandy," said Mr. Kerr. He laughed. It was almost a giggle, and Anne thought, *he has a poor head for liquor*. "Do you make it yourselves?"

"No, we get it from one of our neighbors. I only grow wine."

They fell to talking about prohibition. Anne listened, sipping from her glass. Mr. Kerr seemed to be a nice man. Interesting. He talked well.

In the middle of a swallow, Anne's teeth began to click against the edge of the tumbler. She was shivering. For a moment she didn't know why. Then she realized what the reason was: She was frightened—frightened to death.

Frightened? Of what? This wasn't like the causeless horror that had enveloped her in the bedroom. This fear had a focus and a source.

She set her teeth together, to stop the shivering, and looked around the room. Mr.

Kerr, his hands over his eyes, was sitting back in the chair and saying to Will that he didn't think the amendment would be going to pass, it would never have had a chance of passing, except that the soldiers weren't at home to register their opposition to it. Will was nodding and agreeing. The clock was ticking peacefully.

MR. KERR—Will—the quiet familiar room—and Anne herself, shaken from head to heels by tremors of fear she could barely repress. She hoped Will wouldn't notice anything.

What was it? What *was* it? That she didn't know what she was afraid of only added to her fear.

The high neck of her shirt-waist was stifling her. She fumbled at the fastening. She licked her lips and looked down at the green roses of the carpet; she was afraid she was going to faint.

Mr. Kerr was saying, "Of course, it still may not pass." He laughed; and Anne, with the surface of her mind, thought, *he's a nice man, but*

he's had a tumbler and a half of brandy. He's a little drunk.

She wasn't going to faint. She looked up. There was a sensation of pressure released, a tiny click, in her mind, like the way her ears had clicked when she drove over Tehachapi Pass. Now she knew what she was afraid of. Mr. Kerr.

Yes, Mr. Kerr. For all he was such a nice man. She was afraid of him, and the others like him. Now that he was a little drunk his mind was relaxing itself and letting her see what was inside it. No wonder she was afraid.

SHE HAD a sudden indistinct picture of an airplane—no, not a plane, it was shaped more like a bullet—high, high in the air, casting something to the upper winds. The plane was so high that the earth beneath it looked round. And from what the plane cast out, people in the world below began to sicken and die. It was sowing the seeds of the flu.

Her heart was racing. She licked her lips again. She must be going crazy, she must be losing her mind... But Mr. Kerr was one of the ones that had been up in that plane.

Mr. Kerr stirred in his chair and coughed. Will was talking now, gesturing with the brandy glass to emphasize a point he was making. Mr. Kerr coughed again and then turned and shot an exceedingly sharp glance at Anne.

She felt mental tendrils brush her. Abruptly she realized why Mr. Kerr had gone past Garretson's place and come here. Her ability to see into people's minds had drawn him, without his being aware of it, in the same way, a man might be attracted by a woman's cologne and yet not know she was wearing it. Mr. Kerr had a little of the gift Anne had, and he had felt her mind. It had attracted him.

As he felt it now. Once more Anne had the sense of mental contact. This time, without volition, instantly, a screen around her mind went up—a screen of thoughts about tating and the neglected housework and worry about her illness, a screen of thoughts about the crocheted borders on bathtowels and whether Will was getting another abscessed tooth. Mr. Kerr looked away again.

ANNE FELT sick with relief. But she must be more careful; she must keep the screen up and go on thinking inside it. —The ship in the upper air, of course, had been the reason why she had been so haunted with fear, so anxious and depressed.

Will asked, "What brings you to this part of the country, Mr. Kerr? It's pretty here. But visitors mostly stay on the other side of the bay."

"Oh, just looking over things. Just getting the feel of the California countryside." (Perfectly true, Anne thought: just looking over things, the way a man who had bought a house looks it over before he moves into it.) "And then, in my line of work..."

"Your line of work?" Will asked interestedly.

"Yes. I'm a pathologist." He laughed. "I specialize in disease."

(And *that* was more truth.)

"From Washington?" Will was frowning. "Mr. Kerr, I wonder if you could help us. There's been a disease in my vines... Or do you specialize in diseases like that?"

"No, not exactly. But

might be able to suggest something."

"I'll go get the piece of vine to show you. I'm afraid it's the Anaheim disease."

Will left the room. Anne didn't want Mr. Kerr looking at her. She said, "Mr. Kerr, could I trouble you to pour me a little more brandy? And perhaps you'd like more yourself."

"Certainly." He laughed; again, it was almost a giggle. He *did* have a poor head.—The great thing, Anne thought, was to hold her mind relaxed and passive, open to Mr. Kerr's thoughts, without making the slightest effort to contact them. Mr. Kerr wasn't, umh, able to see into people's minds the way she was. But he'd certainly know it if she tried to contact him. If only she weren't so scared!

HE POURED brandy into the glass she held out to him. He poured more for himself. Anne said brightly, "Was the accident to your auto serious, Mr. Kerr? Will could call Napa and get help for you."

"No, not too serious, Mrs. Sebastian. I believe I can fix it myself after I've rested.

Your husband wasn't encouraging about the kind of help I could get from Napa."

Will came back with a piece of diseased vine. "I'm afraid it may be the Anaheim disease," he said, "because the vines died so quickly." He held the piece out to Mr. Kerr.

Mr. Kerr did not take it. He drew back a little, got a gauze mask out of his pocket—the kind of gauze mask so many people were wearing because of the influenza, and put it on.

"Please hold the plant still," he said to Anne's husband. He got what looked like a folding magnifier from his coat and bent over the specimen.

Will laughed. "It's a disease of vines," he said. "I never heard of *people* getting it."

"They might, they might," Mr. Kerr answered. It seemed to Anne that his face under the mask had turned pale.

Carefully he moved the magnifier up and down the piece of vine. He was frowning.

"I would burn it," he said at last. "I am sorry. I don't know any cure for it."

"You've seen it before?" Will asked.

INTO ANNE'S mind, relaxed and passive, there came a picture of a disease of vines—*this disease?*—that, where Mr. Kerr came from, was fatal to people too. Mr. Kerr's people were very much afraid of it.—And yet the flu didn't bother them at all. They could scatter it with impunity, or even make it more deadly. They were immune to it.

Will sighed. He put the piece of vine down on the parlor table and sat down beside Anne on the sofa. He seemed tired.

"I would burn it," repeated Mr. Kerr. "...Is there much of it on your place?"

Anne put her foot on Will's, and pressed. She hoped she wouldn't get one of his corns.

"Quite a lot," she said, staring into her brandy glass. "There's quite a lot of it in the valley, too. It's pretty much all over, really. Of course we try to keep it quiet. We don't want the drys to hear about the trouble we're having."

Will gave her a quizzical look, but said nothing. "Can't the University help?" Mr. Kerr asked. He believed her—he didn't know she had any reason to lie to him—but he

was a little skeptical too. He thought she was exaggerating. He hadn't seen any sign of such wide-spread infection on his trip through the valley.

"They haven't been able to," Anne answered. "That's why Will asked you. He thought you might know something more, being from Washington."

MR. KERR shook his head. "No...I'm afraid I must be going. I'd better be getting back to my auto. Thank you very much indeed for your hospitality."

He wanted, Anne saw, to get away. He was afraid of catching the disease.

Would it be enough? Would the lies she had told him be enough? He was certainly alarmed. But—no, nobody ever abandoned a serious plan of conquest just because of the lies one person told him. It would take something more, a good deal more.

"You can't go without tasting the wine we make ourselves," Anne declared. "Can he, Will? After all, this may be the last chance you'll have to drink wine for a long time, if

the dries get their way. And if you're worried about catching the vine disease, Mr. Kerr..." she smiled, letting him see how foolish she thought him... "Why, wine's the best anti-septic in the world."

"Yes, Mr. Kerr, you've got to taste our wine," Will echoed. He rubbed his forehead as if it ached.

"It's Zinfandel," Anne said. "Three years old. We made it before we had any vine disease. That only showed up the last year."

MR. KERR sat down again. He didn't want any wine, but he didn't want to make them suspicious.

"I'll get it," Will offered.

"No, let me," Anne said quickly. "I feel quite all right. And you wouldn't know where the fancy glasses were, Will."

She got to her feet. Her heart was pounding, but she felt surprisingly strong. She picked up the vine fragment from the table, saying, "I'll burn it in the range," and went out to the kitchen.

There was an open bottle of the vintaged Zinfandel in the cupboard. She got the crystal

wine glasses down from the top shelf. She stripped pieces of vine leaf from the diseased vine fragment and put a few of them in each glass. She poured the wine in on top of them, and mashed and muddled the leaves with a teaspoon. When she had done a good job of mashing, she fished the leaves out again. It might give the wine an odd taste, but she doubted that Mr. Kerr would notice. He didn't seem a man who would care much for wine.

She put the glasses on a little painted tray her mother had given her, and carried them into the parlor.

MR. KERR accepted one of them. He drank the wine quickly, with hardly a pretence of critical appreciation. "Very nice," he said. "A shame we're going to be deprived of this, isn't it? And now, I really do have to go."

They accompanied him to the door. "Too bad he couldn't help us," Will said when they had seen him off. "Say, Anne, what did you tell him all those lies for?— He left that magnifier of his. I'd better go after him."

"No, don't." She put up her hand to restrain him. "He was in a hurry to get away. If he wants it, he'll come back for it." Nervously she opened up the magnifier and looked through it at the fabric of the cloth on the parlor table.

"My, this is certainly a high-power glass," she said distractingly. "It's iots stronger than that compound microscope you used to have, Will. I don't understand how a small glass can have so much power. Come and look, Will. You never saw anything like it."

"Is it?" her husband answered rather vacantly. "You know, Anne, I don't feel very well. I wonder if I'm getting the flu."

IT WAS THE flu. Fortunately, he did not have it in its most severe form, and Anne was by now well enough to nurse him through it. As she tended him, she used to wonder how Mr. Kerr was getting along. She didn't dare to try

to contact his mind with hers; and anyhow, as she got back to normal health her clairvoyant abilities diminished. Once she had an impression—it was no more than that, and extremely fleeting—that the people on the big plane so high up were beginning to sicken. But her depression, her despair, had gone.

The Anaheim disease, if it had been that, didn't come back. Perhaps Will had caught it in time. After he got well, the Sebastians decided to keep on growing wine.

There was another worldwide flu epidemic, not nearly so deadly as the September one, in March. The people on the big ship were in no condition to breed the yet more deadly viruses their program had called for. By April the danger was over. The invaders were all dead.

It will not recur. We ourselves have poisoned earth so thoroughly that our planet is no longer desirable.



editorial



THE FUTURISTIC DETECTIVE

IT IS JUST in recent years that we've begun to see the detective story in science fiction, and the appearance of such tales as Asimov's "Naked Sun" and Randall's "A Little Intelligence" suggest a reappraisal of the question of science fiction detectives.

Formerly, the general opinion was that the detective story—by which I mean the traditional murder mystery—could not be handled in science fiction. The argument was that since we are dealing with super-scientific devices, etc., the

reader cannot have a fair chance—after all, our futuristic Hawkshaw can pull any manner of gimmick out of his hat in order to nail the culprit, and our malefactor may use any sort of unknown device, etc., to conceal his misdeeds.

To which I say, "Nonsense!" It ain't necessarily so by any means. Science fiction authors can follow the rules just as easily as the authors of today's whodunits. In following them, the science fiction author can produce a story which, in so far as it is a puzzle for the

reader to solve if he can, is as much of a sporting event as the offerings of Agatha Christie or Rex Stout—to name two present-day detective story authors who are noted more for playing fair with the reader than cheating him.

BACK IN the late 20s, or early 30s, Willard Huntington Wright (better known as S. S. Van Dine) made up a list of rules for writing detective stories, which, if followed would keep the murder mystery within the confines of a sporting event, so far as the puzzle was concerned. (I repeat the “so far as the puzzle is concerned” because the detective story doesn’t have to be nothing more than a puzzle.) Let’s take a look at some of the most important of these rules.

First of all, there’s equality of opportunity between the detective and the reader. “. . . *All clues must be plainly stated and described.*” Now this does not mean that everything which is a “clue” must necessarily be labelled “clue” and thus presented to the reader, at the time it is noted. A “clue” does not

have to be an *object*: it may be an event, a reaction on the part of some character, or a description of the scenery or setting which the detective has seen—but which he does not identify *as a clue* at the time. It may be some character’s description of something claimed to have been seen, heard, or done—which becomes apparent as a clue later on. And perhaps the reader will spot the connection before the detective does.

One well-used, but entirely legitimate, device is a character’s “evidence” which appears to be substantiated by someone else, but actually is not—we really only have this character’s word for it. In John Dickson Carr’s “The Emperor’s Snuff-Box”, the fact that one character has been tricked into believing she saw an object, and event, leads to such spurious confirmation. (And, I might add, here is one instance where Carr was playing fair with the reader—the trickery was legitimate.) It was a “. . . *deception played . . . by the criminal on the detective himself . . .*”, which Van Dine notes as allowable. What is not allowable

is the willful trick or deception played on the reader "...*other than those played legitimately by the criminal on the detective himself.*" The sleuth is momentarily deceived—but the reader may say to himself—"Hey, this alibi, etc., hasn't been confirmed at all!"

OF COURSE, the culprit must be determined by logical deductions rather than through "...*accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession....*" ("Motivated" confession would be where the guilty party confirms the detective's chain of reasoning, when confronted with it.) And, of course, the detective must "detect"; he must gather the evidence, all crucial portions of which the reader must be in on, which leads to his final conclusions. And, again, the problem of the crime must be solved by "strictly naturalistic means".

Van Dine here specifically rules out "mind reading", and this necessarily holds for the ordinary murder mystery. But in science fiction "telepathy" could play a role so long as it

is properly controlled. The limitations of telepathy, as it will be used in a given story, must be outlined beforehand and never departed from; nor may the detective "solve" the crime simply by reading the culprit's mind at an opportune moment. (But what he read in various characters' thoughts, and what was thus passed on to the reader, may form part of the chain of logic which leads to the truth in the end. It should only be *part* of the solution, not the clincher, or the "single mistake" on the culprit's part which leads to his or her apprehension.)

The culprit, too, must be a major character in the story—not a stranger or bit-part player—and someone in whom the reader takes an interest. Servants and menials should be ruled out, with the exception of someone playing a part of a confidential clerk, or the like—someone in a position of trust and respect, more or less a peer of the others.

VAN DINE writes, "*The method of murder, and the means of detecting it, must be*

rational and scientific". In this passage, he rules out "...*pseudo-science and imaginative and speculative devices*..."—again, a sound prohibition for the ordinary detective tale. And it is this taboo which has made so many feel that we just can't have a "fair" murder mystery in science fiction. But if all such devices and methods are presented to the reader well in advance, and we are assured that nothing further will be pulled out of the hat later on, then we still have a sporting chance to beat the detective to the solution. For example, we are told the limitations of the device in Asimov's "Naked Sun"; the criminal makes use of these very limitations to achieve the apparently impossible. This is entirely legitimate, and I don't think I'm the only one who figured it out ahead of Ike's sleuth. (Just as I'm sure that many readers didn't think of it.)

Just as in the ordinary detective story, in the science fiction variety the truth "...*must at all times be apparent—provided that the reader is shrewd enough to see it*..." That is

a hard saying, for it sounds as if the beginning of the revelation should be present right at the graveside. Yet, in a sense, this should be so. At first, it might be only a suspicion or possibility; but the construction ought, indeed, to be such that if the reader re-reads the story, he will see that "...*the solution had, in a sense, been staring him in the face*..."

I think we can agree that the culprit should not be a professional criminal—with the possible exception of the instance where he poses, and is accepted all through the story, as an ordinary citizen; and the fact that he is a criminal from way back plays no part in the solution of the mystery. (Which means that it isn't his motive for the crime, nor is he aided by "underworld" contacts, etc., in his duel with the detective.) Secret societies must be ruled out in the same manner. The guilty one must not have any sort of organization to fall back upon that any other ordinary person might not have.

VAN DINE excludes the political motive, maintaining

that the motive must be personal. I would amend this to the extent that political considerations may be involved, so long as the reader is made aware of their existence, but must not be the culprit's sole motivation. There were political motivations in "A Little Intelligence"—but several suspects had them; this was not enough to pin down the murderer. The individual, personal motivation still had to be uncovered in order to solve the riddle.

Like Van Dine, we insist upon murder (although lesser crimes may also be involved) for the main misdeed investigated—and the "murder" must not turn out to have been accident or suicide. He concludes finally with a list of outworn devices for pinning the guilt upon the right party; and since he wrote, many others could be added.

In real life, chance and coincidence often play an important part in the solution of murder, as any investigator will tell you. Can we rule them out completely and still have verisimilitude? I'd say we cannot, and should

not—but the solution must not rest upon chance or coincidence, nor should any *vital* clue be presented to the detective by sheer luck. (The late T. W. Ford once told me that he couldn't resist using chance and coincidence at times—but he always used them against the detective.)

Van Dine notes that, given the "fair" murder mystery, there must of necessity be a certain percentage of readers who will beat the detective to the culprit. This should be true in the well-constructed, legitimate science fiction murder mystery. However, the odds are that, even if I spot the guilty party ahead of Hercule Poirot, I can rarely solve the entire mystery—so I still have to read on to see how the entire puzzle was worked out, and am still left with a measure of satisfaction at the author's ingenuity.

The "sporting" detective story of our times has a fine tradition, which continues, despite the accumulation of shoddy imitations where the reader has no chance (or brilliant mysteries wherein we're forced to forgive the author's tricks

because they're so damned clever—as is so often the case with John Dickson Carr) and pseudo-whodunits of the hard-boiled school. (After all, Mike Hammer is a late-comer; you

can trace that type of story at least as far back as the 20s.) But as a “fan” of this type of reading, I'd like to see science fiction get into the honest murder mystery, and vice versa.

Next Time Around

EVERY NOW AND THEN, someone writes in to say that such-and-such a tale wasn't too bad—but, golly, it wasn't good enough to be a cover story! And they ask why the cover was taken from this particular story.

Now just in case someone thinks some other item in our February issue is more deserving of cover illustration than Carl Knox's “Delivery Guaranteed”, let me tell you the inside story behind the story.

Ed Emsh had just brought in the finished job on the cover for this present issue, and we fell to talking about science fiction covers in general, and what made a particular one stand out when displayed at the newsdealers, along with

various other magazines of the same nature.

“Sometimes it's an unusual idea,” Ed said, and I added, “Yes — perhaps something outrageous — like . . .”

I won't tell you what followed that “like”, because at those words, we both lit up like those light-bulb flashes you see over the heads of characters in comic strips, when they are suddenly inspired. Ed called for pencil, paper, and crayons, and started a sketch on the spot. The sketch was finished and approved within the hour.

Then, we sent a stat of the finished job to Knox, who tore his hair—but admitted it was the most different cover he'd ever seen. We agree—and hope you will!

make

a

prison

by LAWRENCE

BLOCK

The Altheans had never seen a being like this one before, but they knew he was dangerous. So every precaution had to be taken to make his prison escape-proof.

THE FIRST Althean said, "Well, the tower is completed."

The second Althean smiled. "Good. It is all ready for the prisoner, then?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure he'll be quite comfortable? He won't languish and die in such a state?"

"No," said the first Althean. "He'll be all right. It's taken a long time to build the tower, and I've had ample opportunity to study the creature. We've made his habitat as ideal for him as possible."

"I suppose so." The second Althean shuddered slightly. "I don't know," he said. "I suppose it's nothing more than projection on my part, but the mere thought of a *prison*..." He broke off and shuddered again.

"I know," said the other, sympathetically. "It's something none of us have ever had to conceive of before. The whole notion of locking up a fellow-being is an abominable one, I'll admit. But for that matter, consider the creature itself!"

"It wouldn't do for him to be loose."

"Wouldn't do! Why, it would be quite impossible. He actually *murders*. He killed three of our fellow-beings before we were able to subdue him."

THE SECOND Althean shuddered more violently than before, and it appeared for a moment as though he was about to become physically ill. "But *why*? What type of being is he, for goodness sake? Where does he come from? What's he doing here?"

"Ah," said the first, "now you've hit upon it. You see, there's no way of knowing any of those answers. One morning he was discovered by a party of ten. They attempted to speak to him, and what do you think his rejoinder was?"

"He struck out at them, the way I heard it."

"Precisely! Utterly unprovoked assault, with three of their number dead as a result. The first case of murder on record here in thirty generations. Incredible!"

"And since then..."

"He's been a prisoner. No communication, no new insights, nothing. He eats whatever we feed him—he sleeps when the darkness comes and wakes when it goes. We have learned nothing about him, but I can tell you this for a fact. He is dangerous."

"Yes," said the second Althean.

"Very dangerous. He must be kept locked up. Of course, we wish him no harm—so we've made his prison as secure as possible, while keeping it as comfortable as possible. I daresay we've done a good job."

"Look," said the second, "perhaps I'm squeamish. I don't know. But are you sure he can never escape?"

"Positive."

"How can you be sure?"

THE FIRST Althean sighed. "The tower is one hundred thirty feet high. A drop from that distance is obviously fatal. Right?"

"Right."

"The prisoner's quarters are at the top of the tower, and the top is wider than the base

—that is, the sides slope inward. And the sides are very, very smooth—so climbing down is quite impossible.”

“Couldn’t he come down the same way he’ll go up? It only stands to reason.”

“Again, quite impossible. He’ll be placed in his quarters by means of a pneumatic tube, and the same tube will be used to send him his food. The entire tower is so designed that it can be entered via the tube, and can only be left by leaping from the top. The food that he doesn’t eat, as well as any articles which he tires of, may be thrown over the side.”

The second Althean hesitated. “It seems safe.”

“It should. It is safe.”

“I suppose so. I suppose it’s safe, and I suppose it’s not cruel, but somehow... Well, when will the prisoner be placed in the tower? Is it all ready for his occupancy?”

“It’s ready, all right. And, as a matter of fact, we’re taking him there in just a few minutes. Would you care to come along?”

“It might be interesting, at that.”

“Then come along.”

THE TWO walked in silence to the first Althean’s motor car and drove in silence to the tower. The tower was, indeed, a striking structure, both in terms of size and of design. They stepped out of the motor car and waited, and a large motor truck drew up shortly, pulling to a stop at the base of the tower. Three Althean guards stepped out of the truck, followed by the prisoner. His limbs were securely shackled.

“See?” demanded the first Althean. “He’ll be placed in the tube like that, and he’ll discover the key to his shackles in his quarters.”

“Clever.”

“We’ve worked it out carefully,” the first explained. “I don’t mean to sound boastful, but we’ve figured out all the angles.”

THE PRISONER was placed in the tube, the aperture of which was located at the very base of the tower. Once inside, it was closed securely and bolted shut. The

three Althean guards hesitated for several moments until a red light at the base indicated that the prisoner had entered his quarters. Then they returned to the motor truck and drove off down the road.

"We could go now," said the first. "I'd like to wait and see if he'll throw down the shackles, though. If you don't mind."

"Not at all. I'm rather interested now, you know. It's not something you see every day."

They waited. After several minutes, a pair of shackles plummeted through the air and dropped to the ground about

twenty yards from the two Altheans.

"Ah," said the first. "He's found the key."

Moments later, the second pair of shackles followed the first, and the key followed soon thereafter. Then the prisoner walked to the edge of the tower and leaned over the railing, gazing down at them.

"Awesome," said the second Althean. "I'm glad he can't escape."

The prisoner regarded them thoughtfully for several seconds. Then he mounted the railing, flapped his wings, and soared off into the sky.

3 Gripping Mystery Tales

DEAD, YOU'LL BE BEAUTIFUL

by Clare Hamilton

SNATCH ME, SWEETHEART

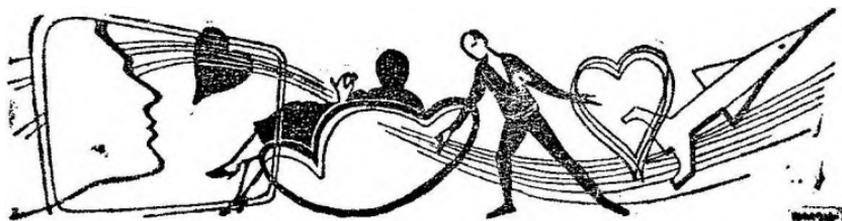
by Calvin M. Knox

FIRST TO DIE

by Andrew J. Ray

featured in the November issue of

DOUBLE ACTION DETECTIVE & Mystery stories



A Department For The
Science-Fictionist

INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

Reports and Reminiscences

by **Robert A. Madle**

HOLLYWOOD *Product*
Dissected By Scienti-
film Experts: A dis-
tinguished trio of scientifi

experts discussed, criticized, and probed the potentials of fantasy films, past and present, at the 1034th meeting of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, held recently. Forrest J. Ackerman, who was writing about scientifi

more than a quarter of a century ago, used material from his *Science Fiction Yearbook* resume of s-f films as a springboard for the discussion; Charles Beaumont told of strange happenings among the progenitors of today's scientifi

and Walt Lee, scientifi

extraordinary (he has more than 2000 film titles in his files), added apt information. Some of the films discussed were "Forbidden Planet," "Destination Moon," "King Kong," "Fire Maidens from Outer

Space," and "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

Beaumont stated that movie-makers are apparently not businessmen, but hobbyists, and fall into two classes: those who have no money, and those who have more money than they can use. Richard Matheson, for example, was ignored by Hollywood for six years. He no sooner arrived in NYC (after giving up in disgust) than he received a hurry-up call to come to Hollywood to script "The Incredible Shrinking Man." (He received for this \$15,000.) And, despite the fact that it was a great success, plans for a sequel, "The Fantastic Little Girl," were killed because several kids, at the original preview, kidded: "It shrinks!"

Primary complaints submitted: people who know nothing about s-f are in charge of putting it on the screen; to these people it means only monsters or creatures; Hollywood s-f writers would be the last people on earth to be offered s-f scripting jobs.

It was suggested that s-f fans can combat such evils by

writing to producers, panning bad s-f and praising good—but not stating they are s-f fans—just plain Joes writing because of the effect a certain picture had on them. Also, it might be a good idea to recommend a good s-f book that you just happen to know of. A few letters mean a great deal to a producer.

DAMON KNIGHT *Featured Speaker at 1957 Philcon:* Speaking before 100 science fiction people at the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society's 16th Annual Conference, Damon Knight claimed science fiction isn't, in general, literature. Most contemporary s-f, said Knight, is merely transplanted western, love, or mystery stories. To be real science fiction, the story should be written around some scientific extrapolation. In his usual trenchant style, Knight analyzed the stories of A. E. von Vogt and Philip K. Dick, among others.

Sam Moskowitz, who has been feuding with Knight of late as to the latter's ability as a literary critic, was also on the program. However, the

bombshell expected (and eagerly anticipated) by the attendees, did not materialize. knight wasn't even mentioned by Moskowitz and Theodore L. Thomas as they interviewed Larry Shaw, editor of *Infinity Science Fiction* and *Science Fiction Adventures*. Penetrating questions were asked of Larry, many of them about his own editorial policies.

Other highly-interesting features of the conference were David A. Kyle's movies of the recent London World S-F Convention; a showing of the Bell Telephone color movie (TV'd just several weeks earlier), "The Strange Case of the Cosmic Rays"; a meeting of the organization devoted to the preservation of the Robert E. Howard legend, "The Hyborcean Legion"; and a big fan-type party, attended by the out-of-town fans, who were present from such places as Washington, D.C., Cambridge, Massachusetts, Detroit, and Cleveland. Tom Purdom, who has recently sold to *Science Fiction Quarterly* and *Fantastic Universe*, was Chairman of the affair. Anyone interested in receiving information of

1958's conference should write to him at 261 S. 21st Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Thanks to Phil Castora, of Washington D.C., for the above Philcon report.

NEWSPAPER AND Views: The successful launching of *Sputnik* has resulted in quite a few s-f personages receiving considerable newspaper publicity. Willy Ley and Arthur C. Clarke have, of course, been quoted rather extensively. "Lee Correy" (Harry G. Stine) was fired outright by Glenn L. Martin Company for making statements about our missile program, which he had made in his various books on several prior occasions. *The Washington Daily News* carried a feature article on David Lasser who, in 1931, wrote the first American-published book on space travel, "*The Conquest of Space*." Lasser, however, published the book himself, as publishers were not interested in such a subject during the depths of the depression. Lasser sold out the entire edition of 5000 copies, including 12 to the Russian government. In the article it is stated that he

was a "wild-eyed editor of science fiction magazines" in the early thirties. He was, in fact, Managing Editor of Gernsback's *Wonder Stories* from June, 1929 to October, 1933.

Lasser, in the interview, told of the formation of the *American Interplanetary Society* (which has since become the highly respected *American Rocket Society*). He mentioned that he joined with a group of science fiction writers to form the organization. (Among the others were Lawrence Manning and G. Edward Pendray, the latter known to science fictionists under the pen name of Gawain Edwards.) "We were all called crackpots, but we believed in it," said Lasser. Today David Lasser is almost completely unknown in the field of rocketry. Only early s-f fans and a few graybeard rocketry enthusiasts can recall him. However, a few quotes from his out-of-print book will display the fact that the world is finally catching up with the David Lasser of 26 years ago. He had this to say on the space station:

Perhaps by 1950...a station in space may be attracting the worldwide attention of engineers. The proposal of German professor Hermann Oberth to build an artificial satellite...may provide the mental and physical stepping-stone from our conquest of the earth to that of the solar system.

HE PREDICTED that the first earth satellite would be a "giant rocket shot into the air" and would circle the earth "every 90 minutes" at an altitude of 500 miles!

Predicting the ICBM he said, "An army on one side of the earth can bombard an enemy on the other side with a murderous rain of rockets containing poison gas which could exterminate an entire population."

Unfortunately, the following quotation has not materialized:

The release of atomic energy would solve the interplanetary (fuel) question and also solve the whole problem of power for our economic and social needs,

and from that standpoint provide a veritable Utopia.

David Lasser, for those who are wondering what he has been doing all these years, is Research Director for the International Union of Electrical Workers.

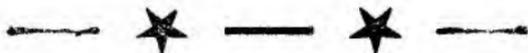
IN RECENT months, science fiction personalities such as Willy Ley, Lee Correy, David Lasser, G. Edward Pendray, and Arthur C. Clarke have been publicized quite prominently in the nation's press. Now, however, s-f has reached the point of being featured editorially in *The Washington Post*. And guess who was chosen for this unique honor? None other than the father of modern s-f himself, Hugo Gernsback. The editor states that "...it is willingness to indulge in fantasy that is the first step to innovation. Mr. Gernsback is an honorable

member of an authentically American breed whose eyes are fixed on distant stars, risking ridicule from the earthbound and mundane. May his breed increase."

Back in the '30's, such a statement in a large metropolitan newspaper would have created a sensation in the microcosm of s-f fandom. Today, with the advent of the conquest of space, such comments are certainly not unusual. To wit, the following quote:

In the last analysis, we are deciding... whether the world is to be a dead planet spinning in swift silence through the endless time and space of the universe or whether this noble but brief human experience on earth shall be carried to the stars.

No, this is not quoted from one of the stories of the early 1930's, but was spoken on the Senate floor by Senate Democratic Whip, Mike Mansfield of Montana!





THE LAST WORD



The Reckoning

OVER-ALL statistics are often deceptive, but you can get a general idea from them. For example, I lumped *all* the votes received on "The Tower of Zanid" together, then broke them down in order to see what percentage of the total were "outstanding", "first place", "last place", and "dislike". 18% of the total were "outstanding"; 42% were "first place"; 6% "last place", and 6% "dislike". (The percentage figures are approximate.) This does not account for those whose opinion shifted between installments. And lumping the four point-ratings for the issues together, and dividing before, we get an over-all point-score of 1.88.

I do think that we can conclude from the above, that a considerable majority liked the novel, and that a good percentage of that majority liked it very much. It goes without saying that I want to hear from all of you on "Caduceus Wild".

On the question of articles, the returns aren't conclusive enough for me to be very sure. Consider: half of the votes received were in favor of articles, and one sixth opposed—but one third did not vote at all. I wonder—should I consider that one third as voting "no"?

Of those who voted in favor of articles, the Macklin type was preferred by approximately three to two. One third of the voters in favor of articles, however, wanted to see both kinds. (The Macklin type of article examines the science in science fiction, as well as comparing prophecy or speculation on "things to come" with what actually happened. The "straight science" article deals with subjects of interest to science fiction readers, subjects often dealt with in science fiction; we try to avoid the sort of article readily found in *Scientific American*, and other publications of that nature.)

I think we'd better have a re-run before I make any policy decision on the matter. Meanwhile you'll see an article here and there, of either type, if I get worthy specimens for exhibit.

Here's the run-down for the July issue.

1. Underground Front (Haugsgraud & Smith)	2.41
2. Tower of Zanid (pt. 3—de Camp)	2.45
3. The Moon—Good Night (Richards)	2.84
4. Last Voyage (Dickson)	3.23
5. Just Desserts (Fang)	3.92
6. Hello, Terra Central (G. H. Smith)	4.30

Oddly enough, only one voter disliked "Underground Front", only one

put it in first place, and only one voted it below the median—lower than third place. It was the “outstanding” votes which made this novelet the winner, in the end. With three exceptions, the serial drew only extreme reactions this time—outstanding, first place, or last place. The Richards story also proved controversial—first place acclamation was balanced by ratings below the median, while the second place and third place votes (many more of the 2 than 3 votes, of course) put it in the “show” position. And Messers Fang and G. H. Smith can take comfort in the fact that they did not fail to receive extreme favor from some of the voters.

For the August issue, the final count shows:

1. The Successors (Chandler)	1.72
2. The Tower of Zanid (end) (de Camp)	1.83
3. Little Brother (Jourdan)	2.45
4. The Four (Knox)	2.83
5. Age of Miracles (Parker)	3.60

This was one of those issues where every story received at least one “outstanding” acclamation—and only the first-placer escaped dislike entirely.

And finally, a report upon a blank test. Instead of asking your opinion, I merely omitted the authors’ names after the story listings in a report some months back. You noticed it and made your wishes known—so they’re back.

DUMONT DEFENDING EMSH

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

HOORAY! I want to congratulate you on your being the first s.f. editor to get up enough courage to set Alma Hill straight in regards to the accuracy in story illustrations. A few months ago, in another magazine, I attempted a rebuttal to her claims; I based this retort on the amount of work turned out every month by Ed Emsh, and how it would be impossible for any artist to be 100% accurate in such a case.

I often figured that the ar-

tists seldom get a chance to read the stories they illustrate—but of course that was mere conjecture, so I didn’t try to back it up in my argument. I also figured Emsh not to be the type to misinterpret a story or any of its aspects (I have corresponded with the man several times, and I believe him to be somewhat more capable than Mrs. Hill seems to think), and in my humble opinion the bulk of his work speaks for itself, just as an author can be analyzed through his stories.

One more point: I have always been at odds with Mrs. Hill pertaining to what she calls the “Emsh Effect” (im-

properly balanced, awkward figures, etc.). Frankly, I wish I could understand what on Earth she's talking about! If Emsh's work were as full of faulty anatomy as she implies, how would he have ever risen to the heights that he has?

About her accusing him of modeling himself after the style of Mr. Cartier—so what? Whether this is true or not, I'm not qualified to comment, having seen only a very few of Cartier's drawings; but I'll say this: Is there anybody in this world who doesn't pattern himself after someone else, sooner or later? The great precedent-setters are always imitated. That's how we learn, by passing on information and time-tested procedures and ideas! Edd Cartier himself must have once had an idol; according to Mrs. Hill, wasn't Cartier the one to return the line drawing to science fiction? If so, my point is proven; he re-established a precedent set forth by someone before him.

You may wonder at my abnormal interest in this matter, and rightly so; the truth of the matter is, my intentions for the future are to break into

s.f. illustrating. That is, if Emsh, Freas, and the other permanent fixtures are willing to let a greenhorn join forces with them.

Perhaps, if this is printed, your readers will think me merely a spunky teenager who thinks he knows more about things than his elders; well, he *doesn't* think so, but he does have very definite ideas about such things as s.f. art, and furthermore he loves a good letter battle—such as the peaceful one he's been having in and out of letter columns with Alma Hill.

Thank you for considering these opinions, and incidentally, thank you for the good word about my favorite artist, Ed Emshwiller.

TIM DUMONT, 30 Munchausen Avenue, Bristol, Conn.

Okay, let's you and Alma fight—and anyone who wants to join in is welcome. I'll write the obituaries, when the fearsome and doubtless gory struggle is over.

PROMOTING SCIENCE FICTION

To the Editor:

Our aim is SF clubs in every

elementary school, high school, and college, with one major aim of the club for each reader to get another person interested in reading in this field. We want to promote the reading of all science-fiction magazines and books. To teachers and students interested in starting clubs, we will furnish suggestions on programming interesting meetings, enlarging and diversifying the science-fiction interests of members, and getting new readers.

Enclosed is a photostat of an article recommending science-fiction clubs to science teachers as a way of encouraging inter-

est in science. We hope you will be interested in helping us to achieve this aim. Enclosed is a possible announcement which we would greatly appreciate if you would consider placing in your magazine. We will take care of all correspondence and inquiries coming in, at no cost to you. Our only wish is to encourage the reading of science-fiction by the youth of today.

We will appreciate any cooperation you can give.

FRITZ LEIBER, EARL KEMP, F. L. LIGHT, Committee: Science Thru Science-Fiction

STUDENTS! TEACHERS!
START

A
SCIENCE FICTION CLUB
in your school

Have interesting meetings
Meet people who read Science-Fiction
For information on how to start a club write to
Science Thru Science-Fiction
Box No. 9148
Chicago 90, Illinois

As Dr. Sloane used to say, "This letter speaks for itself."

But since the mere act of publishing does not necessarily indicate editorial agreement with the matter published, let me state here that I'm all for this effort.

UNSCIENTIFIC?

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Your August edition left me with the feeling that its editors wished to become acquainted with their Science Fiction Fans,

as it were—or more aptly put, their readers. This is what, to my way of thinking, makes or breaks any good piece of intellectual material.

Knowledge, in this day and age, is an article much needed to quench man's insatiable thirst for intellectual supremacy. This I find in my Science Fiction collection, a collection which subtly induces my conscious mind to learn. To me, retrospectively, this is the most important facet to a good Science Fiction story. When I read a story, it must have continuity, as well as imaginative, sound, scientific texture.

Let us take, for example, the works of one of the Masters—Isaac Asimov. When this man writes about Semi-Organic mechanical brains, he makes it a very special point to include some of his Biochemical background and very enjoyably gets his ideas across. All the while, the reader is learning and benefiting. Conversely, L. Sprague de Camp, in his works, uses names such as "Mjipa" organizations such as "Safq", and places such as "Uriiq". Need I say, Mr. Lowndes, these nouns stagger the mind, leaving us

with lack of understanding and at the same time, makes us all feel as though we need schooling in articulation.

Although we, the readers, are gullible, we are not so gullible that we cannot see through a rather phoney plot. In making this statement, allow me to clarify it. Many are the stories that I have picked up only to find that they take place in a section of the cosmos as yet to be conceived, and in addition, they are about people with names which stump me and some of the words which are the writers' inventions, defy conception.

I don't wish to learn an imaginary language, nor do I wish to learn unscientific facts. These are my opinions, and in my benevolent state of mind, I hope I have offended no one.

*VERNON E. PAUL, 14409
Linnhurst, Detroit 5, Mich.*

I gather that you feel that science fiction should deal only with immediate possibilities, or reasonable probabilities, based upon what is known here and now. Obviously then, we can't have any alien beings or civilizations, because none have been discovered. Or do you feel that

this would be all right, if they all speak English?

I can see your point; and despite my own personal preferences, if a substantial majority of the readers agree with you—this to be determined by quantities of letters taking one stand or the other—then my duty as an editor (rather than a reader) is to give the majority what it wants, so far as I can.

I think you'll find that "Mjipa" is a perfectly acceptable name for a man with the consul's lineage and background. I shouldn't be at all surprised to find that the name exists today—in fact, I'd be astonished if there were no one alive on this Earth today with that surname.

The contention that science fiction, first and foremost, ought to be instructive, is an ever-recurrent one. My feeling is that while science fiction should never include as "fact" that which is known to be false at the time of writing, every story need not be pedagogical in essence; nor is this the first function of the art. Again, however, I'll conform to the desires of the majority, so far as possible, whenever I can discover what these desires are.

<p>Have you sent your vote in to The Reckoning?</p>
--

13-ISSUE REPORT

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Thanks for forwarding those letters from other readers. They all said they enjoyed getting out their pencils to see how their own opinions coincided with mine and yours. Apparently, it's pretty rare when all three of us—you, I, and any other particular reader—agree on an item. Several suggested that I cut the preliminary remarks down as far as possible. Okay, since I'm an institution, I guess I'll have to submit to regulation, eh? So, no cover comment this time—just the usual explanation of how I get my ratings.

I read an issue, type the titles of the stories on a sheet of paper, then put it away for at least two months, at which time I take it out and rate the stories, without referring to the magazine again. If a story seems excellent, very good, or poor or awful after that length of time—considering all the reading I've done inbetween-times—then I figure it has earned the 1, 2, 4, or 5 rating. The rest are rated as 3, which means just plain good. Some-

times I pick up the magazine when I want to make my capsule comment, but I've never changed my rating after looking it over, despite temptation now and then. So "1" is "excellent"; "2" is very good; "3" is "good"; "4" is "just barely readable"; and "5" is "bad". And I assume that you, Mr. Editor, will have this set up as before. The first set of parenthesis will be my figures; the second will be yours (also given without consulting the issues), and the third will be left blank for the reader. Right? (*Right! RAWL*)

Just one thing more—the order in which the stories appear within a category hasn't any significance. That's the order in which they appeared

on the contents page. Now, to it:

(1) (1) () Art-Work (Blish): outstanding of its type—it certainly ought to be anthologized.

(1) (2) () Galactic Chest (Simak): so it's a sort of fairy-tale; I loved it.

(1) (1) () The Songs of Summer (Silverberg): unusual and most effective.

(1) (1) () Homecalling (Merril): if this section *was* in order of excellence, this story would head it.

(1) (1) () Male Strikebreaker (Asimov): masterfully ironic and entirely convincing.

(1) (1) () Hunting Machine (Emshwiller): an excellent story.
[Turn Page]

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cellent short-story author's finest to date.

(1) (1) () The Disappearing Man (Thomas): splendid humor without slapstick, and a good satire.

(1) (1) () Early Bird (Russell): wonderfully fresh and vital, despite the oldness of the gimmick.

(1) (1) () The Wild Ones (Godwin): this, rather than the "Cold Equations", is the story I remember most fondly by this author.

(1) (1) () Death Wish (Lordi): a new writer starts at the top—has he quit fast while he was ahead?

(1) (1) () The Time For Delusion (Franson): not really science fiction, not really a story, but top-rate nonetheless.

(1) (1) () The Tower of Zanid (de Camp): on the basis of the first half, it's the best of the Viagens series by far.

(1) (1) () The Sound Of The Wind (Thomas): the novelet of the year, by anyone's standards—anyone who has standards!

(2) (2) () The Third City (Walton): powerful and

well-written—but too heavy on melodrama.

(2) (1) () The Saboteur (Garrett): I can't take psi stories seriously enough to rate this higher, fine as it is.

(2) (2) () Social Climber (Lesser): fascinating.

(2) (1) () Consumer-ship (St. Clair): short, packs a punch, but should have been developed farther for my taste.

(2) (2) () Women's Work (Leinster): convincing, as usual with this author—but still lacks something.

(2) (2) () Tools Of The Trade (Randall): the authors' skill makes this more memorable than it would have been otherwise.

(2) (2) () The Stretch (Merwin, Jr.): delightful.

(2) (2) () The Unreconstructed M. (Dick): more or less formula action, but stands out in its class.

(2) (1) () Godling, Go Home! (Silverberg): should have been developed more.

(2) (2) () Lost Love (Janvier): not quite satisfying, though I can't forget it.

(2) (2) () Salt Lake Skirmish (Royale): see com-

[Turn To Page 126]

**Tops
In Western
Fiction**

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issue features*

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ment under "Unreconstructed M".

(2) (2) () Saturnalia (Garrett): Neat, but too condensed; should have been more to it.

(2) (2) () Tempus Non Fugit (Dickson): sort of slapstick, but a terrific idea there.

(2) (2) () Pleasure Orbit (Marks): amusing without getting into the usual cliches.

(2) (1) () Genius Loci (Scortia): Reworking and expanding would have put this one at the very top.

(2) (1) () His Head In The Clouds (Knox): best treatment of this theme yet—and that does it, I'd say.

(2) (2) () Quest (Banister): minor, but awfully good.

(2) (2) () Audition (Arnett): a fine change on an old theme.

(2) (2) () The Better Egg (Hetschel): one of the best pure comedies in science fiction—sheer nonsense, but hilarious.

(2) (2) () Prime Commandment (Knox): should

have been more to it—it was all over too soon.

(2) (2) () Dangerous Weapon (Franson): again, more of an essay than a story.

(2) (2) () Fluorocarbons Are Here To Stay (Westlake): this had me rolling in the aisles.

(2) (2) () Lullaby (Zirul): I should have got the point before the ending, but the author outwitted me.

(3) (3) () Wapshot's Demon (Pohl): a fascinating idea buried in a routine plot.

(3) (2) () The Secret Weapon of Titipu (Spencer): good for many chuckles.

(3) (3) () The Lonely One (Silverberg): good, but an old idea needs something more.

(3) (3) () The Other Army (G. H. Smith): good filler.

(3) (3) () Co-incidence (Booth): likewise.

(3) (3) () The Messiahs (Andrews): interesting way in which the biter is bit, but that's all.

(3) (3) () Occupational Risk (Christopher): The writing was much better than the story, I thought.

(3) (3) () The Quest (Stern): similarly.

(3) (3) () Galactic Gamble (Binder): fair enough specimen of oldtime science fiction.

(3) (2) () Dark of the Moon (Walton): not fresh enough, even though very well handled.

(3) (3) () To Have & To Hold Not (Marks): Okay.

(3) (2) () Zoological Specimen (Chandler): good story, but nothing new about it.

(3) (2) () Extra Space Perception (Winterbotham): I usually don't like this author—this time he was all right.

(3) (3) () Sunrise on Mercury (Knox): clever, but not convincing.

(3) (3) () The Demancipator (Edmonson): at times, I'm in favor of it.

(3) (2) () Fulfillment (Scortia): writing much better than story, which type doesn't appeal to me.

(3) (3) () Neutral Planet (Silverberg): competent and satisfying, but no more.

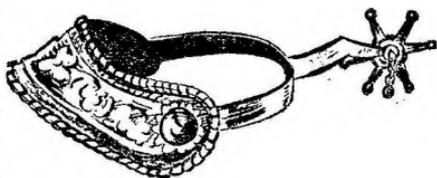
(3) (2) () Femmequin 973 (Leiber): as someone said, how mature can you get?

(3) (3) () Golden Boy (Marks): doesn't have the feel of science fiction, however interesting.

(3) (3) () The Gardener (Jones): all right, but it's been done before and too many times.

[Turn Page]

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(3) (3) () Gag Rule (Scortia): I liked it, but expect better things of this author.

(3) (3) () Return From Troy (Winterbotham): This was decidedly good, however slight.

(3) (3) () Compulsions (Stom): interesting, but somehow it eluded me somewhere.

(3) (3) () Why? (Silverberg): I suppose the answer he gives will do, but I expected more.

(3) (3) () Delay—Temporary (DeVet): okay, but see comment under "Postman's Holiday".

(3) (3) () Pursuit (R. Smith): cute.

(3) (3) () The Heirs (Cox, Jr.): better than usual for this author.

(3) (2) () Far From Somewhere (Garrett): what's here is fine, but I feel that a more important aspect of story isn't here.

(3) (3) () The Jolly Boys (Maneikis): reads like early Kornbluth—not bad at all.

(3) (3) () Robots' Gambit (Wilson): sort of nice,

but not convincing as science fiction.

(3) (3) () Postman's Holiday (DeVet): a much better version of "Delay—Temporary".

(3) (3) () Research Team (Hinkle): gives me the feeling that there's a lot more to it that I somehow don't get.

(3) (3) () The Logical Life (Fritch): okay for filler.

(4) (3) () Mission To The Enemy (Cox, Jr.): his usual fare, which is not to my taste.

(4) (3) () The Disinherited (Cox, Jr.): ditto.

(4) (3) () The Principle (Chandler): not a story, I'd say.

(4) (3) () Just Rub A Lamp (Thomas): cannot compare with his longer jobs.

(4) (3) () The Winning Hand (Moeller): stale.

(4) (3) () Paradox Lost (Howell): likewise.

(4) (3) () Constabulary Duty (Knox): slick story disguised as science fiction.

[Turn Page]

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(4) (3) () **Mirror** (Spencer): several interesting elements, which didn't seem to jell.

(5) (3) () **The Innocents' Refuge** (Thomas): a sad letdown from his novelet excellence.

(5) (3) () **The Janus City** (Cox, Jr.) idiot plot.

(5) (3) () **Invasion Vanguard** (Bethlen): forced and unconvincing.

Hmm...again we have 13 excellent stories; but there's 23 very good ones, as opposed

to 16 very good last time. Only 3 really bad, as against 5 last time; and in the 12 issues in my last report, 10 stories struck me as being just readable, while there were only 8 in thirteen issues, this time. The "3" rated stories are the solid backbone, as usual—but it's those "excellents" and "very goods" that make your magazine stand out above someone else's, which also prints a lot of "good" stories. You continue to progress.

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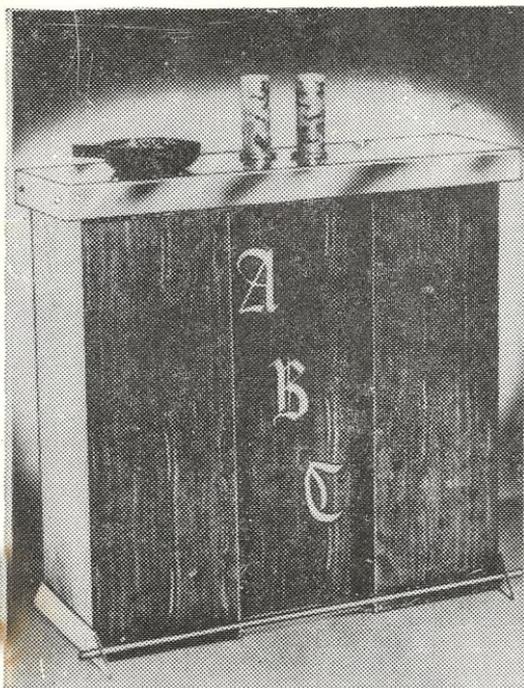
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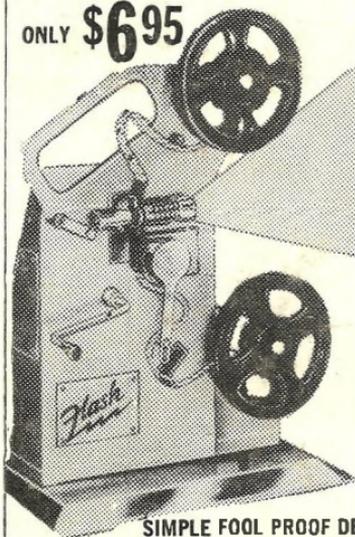
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